

Ken Olende talks to people fighting back against the state >>Pages 10&11

BALTIMORE, POVERTY & RACISM



Politicians from all parties say there is no alternative >>Pages 14&15

Can we buck the market?

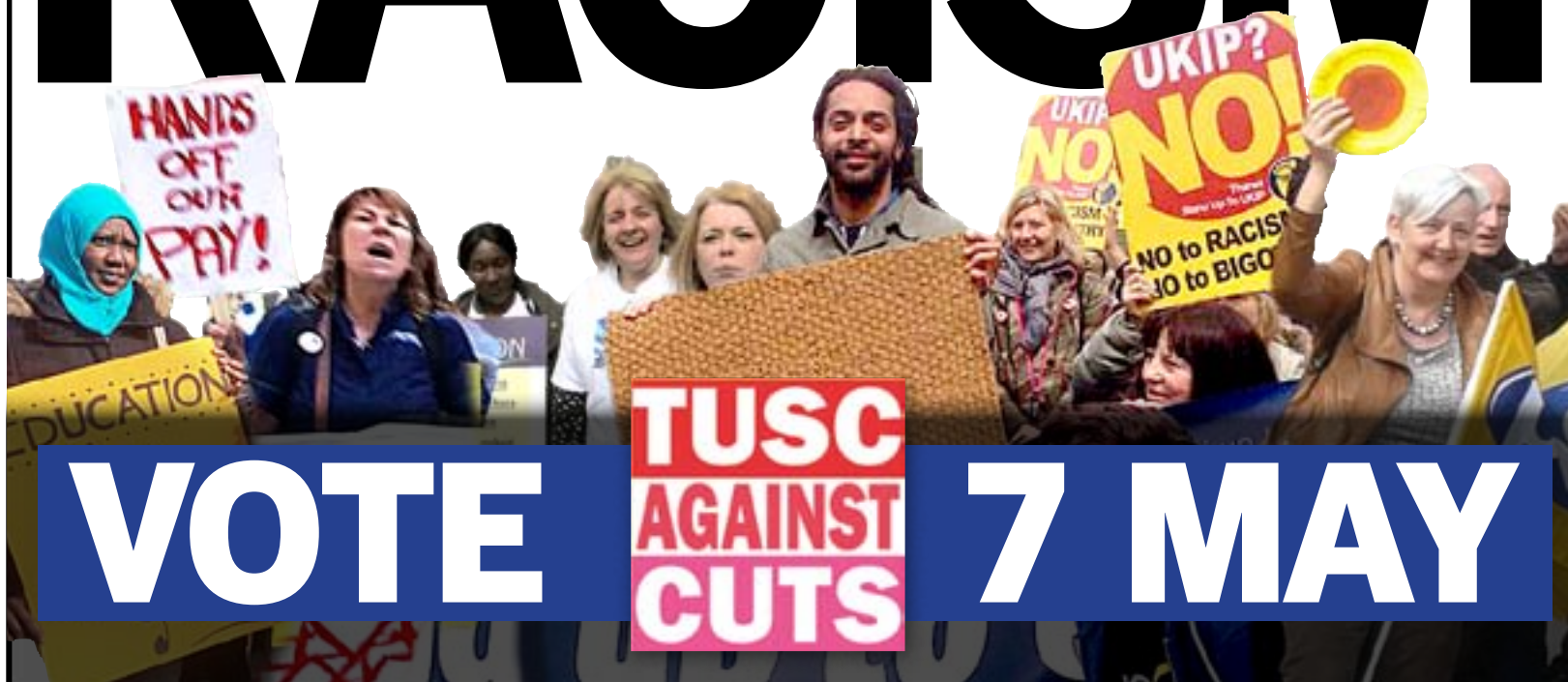


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TORIES OUT ● END AUSTERITY

RESIST CUTS & RACISM



HILLSBOROUGH

Top cop 'tried to concoct a story of drunken fans'

A FORMER chief inspector was part of an internal police group tasked with blaming football fans for the Hillsborough disaster, a court has heard.

A witness to fresh inquests into the 1989 disaster said Norman Bettison told them at the time he was tasked to ensure cops "bore no blame".

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NHS



Cash crisis could 'break' NHS within weeks

THE HEALTH service is "at breaking point", the head of the King's Fund think tank Chris Ham warned last week.

The Tories and Labour both promise more funding but whichever party leader ends up in 10 Downing St, the NHS crisis will only get sharper.

>>Page 4

STRIKE

Eight-day refuse walkout gains workers' support

REFUSE LORRY drivers in Barking and Dagenham, east London, were continuing an eight-day strike as Socialist Worker went to press.

Workers in other unions refused to cross picket lines at the Pondfield depot on Tuesday of this week.

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THE THINGS THEY SAY

'A mother's hair can be lank and lacklustre, so Amanda will have used shine serum and hairspray to hold Kate's loose curls in place'

The Daily Mail on the important issue of what Kate Middleton looked like after giving birth

'Kate's pregnancy nails have been understated. Ever practical, she knows a natural shade is best for a mother of two'

The Daily Mail continues

'The BBC does not need to be doing all of these things'

Ukip leader Nigel Farage disses Doctor Who

'These things often happen'

Iain Duncan Smith failing to turn up for the only hustings in his local constituency

'Of course, we must commit to pay living wage ...but I can't commit to doing this'

Lib Dem leader Nick Clegg



At least some (rich) people are getting decent pay rises

FAT CAT bosses saw their pay and perks surge by an average of £350,000 last year.

The average chief executive of a FTSE 100 company earned more than £4.46 million in salary, bonuses, pension and other benefits in 2014.

The research from the High Pay Centre is based on information in the annual reports of 57 of Britain's biggest companies published over recent weeks.

Topping the list is Royal Dutch Shell chief executive Ben van Beurden, who got £19.5 million—up from just over £7 million in 2013.

Calculations based on figures in Shell's report showed van Beurden's package was 218 times more than the oil giant's average employee.

It would take someone on

the national minimum wage 1,443 years to earn what he got in 2014.

Others who coined it in were Erik Engstrom, head of publisher Reed Elsevier.

He got £16.2 million—up from £5.4 million in 2013. This was 322 times what the company's average employee got.

Prudential chief Tidjane Thiam's £11.8 million was 214 times more than the insurance giant's average worker earned.

Lloyds' boss Antonio Horta-Osorio's £11.5 million package was equivalent to the average annual pay for 345 of the bank's staff

WPP publishes its annual report early next month. Its boss Sir Martin Sorrell, a business ally of David Cameron, is set to have got £40 million for last year.



MARTIN SORRELL—My pile of money is this high

THE DAILY Mail found a new angle to whip up panic over migrants—migrant flowers. It complained that Britain's bluebells could be wiped out within 50 years thanks to a rapid rise in the numbers of Spanish bluebells.

The Spanish variety—which “smell like onions”—now outnumber “more fragrant” Welsh ones.

Not only that, there's bluebell mixing going on! The Mail backed a call for garden centres to “stop selling the invaders as British flowers”.



Spanish invader

DAVID CAMERON said Michael Kidson, his history teacher at Eton, used to throw a block of wood at students who weren't paying attention. He recalled, wistfully, “Health and safety means you can't do this anymore.” Anyone who throws a block of wood at Cameron to get his attention will clearly have the prime minister's backing.

A tasteful gift to celebrate a birth

HUZZAH. A princess. The BBC managed to report, “the Duchess of Cambridge is believed to have been present at the birth,” which was fortunate.

Sky joined in with “King Charles” visiting his new granddaughter.

The in no way tawdry Royal Collection shop—official suppliers of royal tat—offer



numerous ways of celebrating the happy event. Products available include a £19.95 coffee mug and a £39 tankard.

You can go on to choose from plates at £45 each or a limited edition £95 traditional teddy bear.

As the royal shop says, “Using the finest blonde mohair with 100 percent silk paw pads, plus a hand-embroidered nose and smile, each bear has a delightful expression and unique character.”

Crown Derby were more unlucky with their £135 porcelain bear (pictured) which has April 2015 on its chest.

A mere month out on the birth.

Worry about Labour keeping its promises

LABOUR'S Edstone (pictured) caused some fuss in the media and on the internet.

For instance, the Telegraph ran an article titled, “Don't let Ed Miliband sink this country with his commie slab of rock.”

Tory author Boris Johnson wrote with an impressive lack of self awareness, “It's the smugness that

gets me.” Perhaps.

But its not so much the size or positioning of one's stone plinth that bothers Troublemaker.

The worry isn't that Labour will break its pledges but that it may indeed keep them. Pledge one is to balance the books—AKA more cuts.

But it is the commitment to “control immigration” that looks the most worrying on a tombstone.



Keep taking the tablets

Is Nick Clegg lying?

LIB DEM leader (at least as Socialist Worker went to press) Nick Clegg said he found time as a local MP to deal with “38,000 pieces of casework”.

So 3,800 cases each year for ten years.

Taking away weekends, Bank Holidays, Christmas and annual leave means there's about 250 working days.

That is 15 cases a day. Let's assume he has two caseworkers out of the £129,000 he claimed for his office staffing costs last year.

That's 7.5 cases dealt with by each caseworker every working day. That's one an hour.

Either he has the most efficient office ever or Nick Clegg is a liar.

Management technique needs work

NIGEL PIERCY, head of Swansea university's Management School, attacks trade unionists.

He calls people who support a trade union “unpleasant and grubby little people” distinguished only by their “sad haircuts, chewed fingernails and failed careers”.

He added, “However did we allow such creepy little people to develop such an enlarged and disproportionate sense of entitlement?”

This comes from a man so popular that 25 members of staff have left since he took over two years ago.

Strategist to sell the NHS?

THE LOBBYING firm run by the election strategist working for David Cameron advised private health firms on how to muscle in on NHS contracts.

A presentation by Lynton Crosby's company Crosby Textor to an alliance of five private health companies showed how they could position themselves to “take advantage” of the Tory privatisation agenda.

Slides from the presentation suggested the H5 Private Healthcare Alliance “target” politicians to build its share of the NHS market.

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National Gallery action lets a thousand flowers bloom

by ANNETTE MACKIN

WORKERS AT the National Gallery in central London completed their 23rd strike day on Friday of last week and warned bosses they could face more walkouts.

The workers are fighting plans to privatise 400 out of 600 jobs and attacks on trade union rights.

The PCS union members have voted for more action if the privatisation plans are not stopped—and if their victimised union rep Candy Udwin is dismissed.

Bosses suspended Candy on the eve of the workers' first five-day walkout in January.

Her disciplinary hearing is set to take place on Tuesday of next week. Workers are organising a protest on the day of the hearing outside the gallery.

Back

The union has said it will back whatever action the workers decide to take. PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka told Socialist Worker, "Remarkable solidarity has been shown—and the strikers have been getting stronger with each day."

"They are determined to stop the privatisation and determined to get justice for Candy."

"And if the privatisation is not stopped and if Candy is dismissed, we are ready to take whatever action our members decide to do."

The union has also announced it will organise a national demonstration to support the workers for Saturday 30 May on the gallery's doorstep in Trafalgar Square.

One striker told Socialist Worker, "It's good that the union is fully behind us. But now we need to step up the action and also get back out around the country to do more of the speaking tours."

Strikers marched alongside



STRIKERS AT the National Gallery hold up symbolic Van Gogh sunflowers on May Day

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

striking council workers and other trade unionists and activists on London's May Day march and rally in Trafalgar Square.

They made 1,000 sunflowers to hand out to May Day marchers, symbolising Vincent Van Gogh's famous paintings of sunflowers, one of which is held by the gallery. These were then held up when Candy addressed the rally.

Playgrounds

She told the crowd, "We want to send a message that our museums and galleries, our arts and culture, they should be free for all—not just playgrounds for the rich."

Labour put out a statement last month saying it was "concerned" by the dispute and urged bosses to meet with the union for talks.

Ed Miliband said if Labour is elected it will continue free access to national galleries and museums.

But he has not come out in opposition to the National Gallery's privatisation plans or for the reinstatement of Candy.

The union should not wait and rely on Labour to act—only a sustained programme of walkouts can beat privatisation.

Candy told the rally, "I'll send a message to the gallery—if they insist on privatising us and attacking our union then we will escalate the strike action we have taken already."

"Your support has been fantastic—it can give everybody heart. It shows that people around this country want to see an alternative to austerity. They want to see people standing up."

Invite speakers to speak at your union meetings ngnotforsale.wordpress.com
Make donations to the strike fund to sort code 08/60/01 and account no 20169002. Cheques to PCS Culture Media and Sport Association, c/o PCS North West Region, Jack Jones House, 1 Islington, Liverpool L3 8EG

IN BRIEF

Fatality figures must be told

THE DEPARTMENT for Work and Pensions (DWP) has been ordered to disclose the number of benefits claimants who have died.

The DWP had refused a Freedom of Information request aimed at discovering how many deaths followed government cuts.

Not best place to be a mother

BRITAIN IS now in 24th place in the Save the Children charity's annual State of the World's Mothers report.

Women in Britain are more than twice as likely to die during pregnancy and childbirth as those in Poland or Belarus.

Probe into custody death

A 31 YEAR old man died after being arrested by police outside his home in Kirkcaldy, Fife.

Father of two Sheku Bayoh was arrested in the early hours of last Sunday.

Fife police have referred the case to the police investigations and review commissioner.

Devon man dies after arrest

THE INDEPENDENT Police Complaints Commission is investigating the death of a man who fell unconscious while being restrained by police.

He was restrained outside a bar in Paignton, Devon, on Wednesday of last week.

He died in Torbay district hospital last Saturday night.

Cops knew of abuse suspects

SENIOR SOUTH Yorkshire Police (SYP) officers failed to stop child sexual exploitation (CSE) despite being given a list of the main suspected perpetrators in 2003.

Reports from SYP drugs analyst Dr Angie Heal in 2003 and 2006 exposed the links between CSE and drug crime. The first included a list of the suspected main perpetrators of CSE in Sheffield and Rotherham.

The reports have now been released under the Freedom of Information Act. Heal said abusers were

"able to carry on with impunity". She found "significant abuse" in Sheffield and Rotherham.

Dr Heal said there were differences between Sheffield and Rotherham in terms of the ethnic background of offenders.

But she said the police response was the same—to dismiss and blame victims.

"It definitely wasn't a priority," she told the Sheffield Star newspaper. "It was around blaming the victims and not understanding the issue."

Sadie Robinson

Police 'blamed victims'



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In this month's Socialist Review

Simon Assaf on **Imperialism and the new wars in the Middle East**. Plus the war in **Yemen** explained.

Andy Durgan on the **Challenges for Podemos**.

Susan Rosenthal on why **philanthropy** is a big deception.

Au Loong Yu looks at the prospects for the left after **Occupy Hong Kong**.

David Gilchrist looks at the **Workers' Theatre Movement** in 1920s.

Joseph Choonara gives a diagnosis of **sick capitalism**; Sheila McGregor on the challenge of **class and feminism**; Noel Halifax on German author **Gunter Grass**; Sally Kincaid reviews **China's ghost cities**; Xanthe Rose examines indigenous **Australian art**. Plus theatre, art and book reviews.

IN THIS WEEK

1970

100,000 march over Vietnam War

OUTRAGED AT the US government expanding the Vietnam War into Cambodia, some 100,000 people converged on the White House on 9 May.

Protesters were angry that soldiers had shot dead four students at Kent State days earlier.



Cash crisis could ‘break’ NHS within a few weeks of election

by TOMÁŠ TENGYLY-EVANS

BACK STORY

THE HEALTH service is “at breaking point”, the head of the King’s Fund think tank Chris Ham warned last week.

Writing jointly with Nuffield Trust head Nigel Edwards to the Guardian newspaper, Ham warned that the “NHS funding debate is in need of a dose of realism.

“Promises of jam tomorrow when the NHS is under severe pressure today...the parties must spell out when their pledges of extra funding will translate into hard cash.”

The NHS has dominated the general election campaign.

The Tories and Labour have both promised more funding during the next parliament. But the health service is in the grip of a deep crisis after five years of Tory cuts and privatisation.

It needs a sharp injection of cash and a reversal of privatisation.

The latest quarterly monitoring report from the King’s Fund is a damning indictment of the Tories’ running of the NHS.

Fatal

It reveals a health service in fatal financial crisis, budget cuts hurting patients and staff morale at rock bottom.

Some 40 percent of NHS trusts are forecasting a deficit for the end of 2014/15 and 60 percent of finance chiefs admitted they relied on additional financial support, including loans.

Many hospitals are tied down with private finance initiative (PFI) debt.

This blew up last month in east London’s Whipps Cross Hospital, which is facing a projected deficit of more than £100 million.

To deal with it bosses attacked hospital services, downbanded and sacked staff and attacked their trade unions.

Privatisation is breaking up the health service.

A new list of approved providers

A “black hole” in NHS funding became an issue dominating the general election campaign

●The Tories pledged to raid other services for the £8 billion that NHS boss Simon Stevens says is the “bare minimum”

●Labour attacked their plans and pledged £2.5 billion more

●It emerged last month that A&E departments are already spending their winter reserves

●The King’s Fund think tank’s latest report paints a dire picture

to GP commissioning groups is dominated by privateers such as outsourcing giant Capita and US health insurance firm United Health.

And after it emerged that accident and emergency (A&E) departments are already having to use reserves earmarked for next winter, a new wave of A&E crises could be just weeks away.

Even NHS England boss Simon Stevens has admitted that the service is facing a £30 billion black hole.

He asked for £8 billion and promised to find the rest through “productivity savings”—cuts—as part of his Forward View plan.

Under pressure, the Tories have pledged to stump up the £8 billion. But it would mean cutting other public services.

Labour has pledged £2.5 billion more. But as Ham pointed out, £8 billion was the “bare minimum to maintain standards of care”.

And spending on health is lower under the Scottish National Party in Scotland than it is in England and Wales.

Whichever party leader ends up in 10 Downing St, the NHS crisis will only get sharper.



What’s your story?

Email with your ideas
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WORKERS FROM Guy’s and St Thomas’ Hospital marched on Whitehall

PICTURE: MICHAEL BRADLEY

Strike and march show mood to fight

RESISTANCE TO the attacks on the NHS can be built on under the new government.

Protests and campaigns in the days running up to the election show the potential.

In east London more than 100 workers and campaigners filled a room to discuss their response to the crisis at Whipps Cross Hospital.

Porters at Ninewells and Royal Victoria hospitals in Dundee entered their fifth week of an indefinite strike against NHS Tayside bosses’ refusal to grade them properly.

Chanted

Their Scottish National Party (SNP) MSP is Scottish health minister Shona Robison.

On one of Dundee’s biggest May Day marches in years the strikers chanted “Shona do your job” at SNP campaigners.

They are angry at reports of bosses hiring up to 200 “helpers” to scab on their strike.

There is still a mood to fight



in the NHS.

To unleash it, we need to generalise these struggles. They show the real alternative to the destruction of the health service.

More than 100 health workers and supporters marched from Guy’s and St Thomas’ Hospital to Whitehall in central London on Thursday of last week.

The march, organised by the SE1 Health Workers group, was in opposition to attacks on unsocial hours pay in the NHS.

Marching on the department of health, they chanted “David Cameron hear us say—hands off our pay”.

The Tories plan to scrap unsocial hours payments to

bring in seven-day working in the NHS.

Labour has said it will keep them—unless a pay review body in June tells it not to.

Nurse Steph told Socialist Worker, “Nurses are just fed up with how we’re being treated.

Proud

“We want to be proud of the NHS again. All we get at the moment is bad press.

“But no one is really offering anything in the general election.”

There were also workers from the University College Hospital (UCH) in central London and Homerton hospital in Hackney, east London.

Unison union general secretary Dave Prentis pledged to fight any party that comes after unsocial hours payments.

This is how trade unionists and campaigners can build workers’ confidence and the sort of networks that can hold him to it.

NEWS ROUND-UP

Farage rattled as anti-Ukip campaigners take to streets

by SADIE ROBINSON

STAND UP to Ukip (Sutu) activists gave a final push on Saturday of last week to oppose the racist party in the run-up to this week’s election.

In Ramsgate anti-racists rallied in front of the Ukip shop. Ramsgate is in South Thanet, Ukip leader Nigel Farage’s target seat. Campaigners have got him rattled.

“It couldn’t really get much worse locally,” he whined. “I am amazed that the electoral law allows an organisation to be set up to campaign against a party.”

Sutu activists held a big stall in Clacton-on-Sea, where former Tory Douglas Carswell is one of Ukip’s two MPs. And the campaign had a



Protesters in Nigel Farage’s target seat

visible presence on Edinburgh’s May Day.

Polls predicted a loss for Farage as Socialist Worker went to press. It seems some Ukip supporters hoped a campaign of intimidation would bolster his vote.

Activists in Thanet have filmed fascist National Front (NF) members being

welcomed by Ukip officials at a Ukip meeting where Farage was speaking.

NF thugs have attacked Sutu activists in the constituency. Some residents who have put up posters opposing Ukip say they have received anonymous letters covered in swastikas.

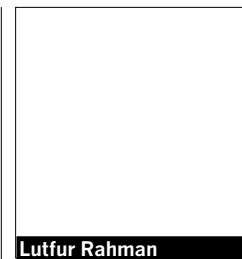
Mass rally in Tower Hamlets backs ousted Muslim mayor

OVER 1,000 people came to a Defend Democracy in Tower Hamlets meeting in east London on Thursday of last week.

It was called after Lutfur Rahman was removed as mayor of Tower Hamlets after an islamophobic witch hunt.

Councillor Alibor Choudhury was also found guilty of “corrupt practices”.

Commissioners



Lutfur Rahman

have been sent in to run the local authority until a new mayor is elected on 11 June.

Rahman announced that councillor Rabina

Khan will stand as an Independent. He said, “The establishment could not win at the ballot box—37,000 residents’ votes have been overturned.”

Other speakers included Salma Yaqoob, Lindsey German from the Stop the War coalition, local trade unionist John McLoughlin, Weyman Bennett, and Andrew Murray from the Unite union.

Navy sits out refugee rescue

BRITISH ships did not take part in the rescue of refugees in the Mediterranean Sea last week.

Search and rescue efforts have been stepped up after an outcry at the number of desperate people drowning as they try to reach Europe.

Britain had previously refused to help, saying that rescuing people might encourage more.

British flagship HMS Bulwark arrived

FIGURE IT OUT

1,300 British citizens evacuated by HMS Bulwark from Lebanon in one trip in 2006

6,801 migrants saved between last Friday and Sunday by the Italian coastguard

1,700 refugees thought to have been killed making the crossing this year so far

in Sicily, but remained in port.

It was waiting for guarantees that it

can dump anyone rescued at the nearest port. It now has this assurance.

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

TORIES OUT—AND BUILD A REAL LEFT ALTERNATIVE

AFTER FIVE years of cuts and racist scapegoating, millions of working class people want to see the Tories get a kicking.

Seeing David Cameron forced out of Downing Street would give a lift to everyone who has marched against austerity, struck against poverty pay or protested against cuts.

But if he manages to hang on despite all he has done, many will feel demoralised about the possibility of stopping more attacks.

Everyone who has marched against racism will want to wipe the smile from Nigel Farage’s smug face. If any Ukip candidates succeed it will keep the bashing of migrants in the mainstream, and give confidence to every racist and bigot.

Socialist Worker supporters are among the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates standing in 136 parliamentary seats and in over 600 council seats across Britain.

Politicians

This is part of building a left alternative to the politicians who all agree on pushing austerity and whipping up racism.

Elsewhere we are also supporting Left Unity, Respect and Scottish Socialist Party candidates, and left wing Green MP Caroline Lucas in Brighton.

The Greens as a party may win votes from people sick of the mainstream politicians, but they are not offering a working class alternative.

Where there isn’t a left alternative candidate Socialist Worker is calling for a vote for Labour in England and Wales.

Labour is not offering a radical

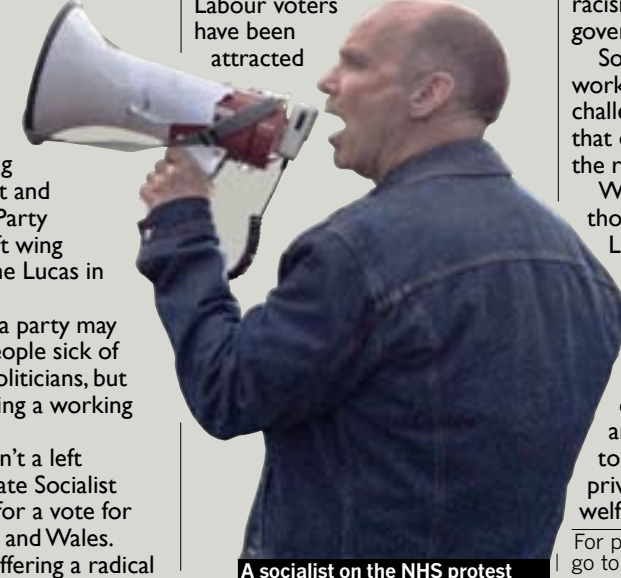
The fight against austerity and racism doesn’t end with the new government

alternative to the Tories. It insists it will pursue “austerity lite” and has joined attacks on migrants.

But many working class people still see it as the party with trade union roots that represents their class against the public school toffs of the Tory Party. If Labour replaces the Tory government it will boost their confidence to resist racism and austerity.

In Scotland this picture no longer fits. Labour’s role in blocking with the Tories to defend the union with Britain in the independence referendum has lost it the mass support of millions of workers.

Many former Labour voters have been attracted



A socialist on the NHS protest

by the Scottish National Party (SNP). It has put a popular anti-austerity agenda at the centre of its campaign. But its record contradicts this message.

Much of the left in Scotland even argued for “lending” a vote to the SNP in the general election then standing independently in the Scottish elections next year.

But building an alternative to Labour that stands against welfare cuts, privatisation and racism can’t wait. We have to start now.

TUSC candidates are standing on a manifesto that opposes all austerity. They and their supporters have been out on the streets and active in local campaigns and disputes.

Roots

We know that TUSC’s electoral impact will inevitably be limited in this general election. But the campaigns have built roots and networks for the future.

It’s vital to begin to build a united left that can challenge Labour. The left in Britain is still too divided.

Winning votes for TUSC is part of that. But for socialists the fight against austerity and racism doesn’t end when the next government takes office.

Socialists look to building working class struggles. These can challenge the dominant agenda that demands the poor pay while the rich get richer.

We have to be ready to build those fights. Both the Tories and Labour have said that they will attack working class living standards in order to balance the budget.

We have to be ready to stop them. We need to build opposition rooted in struggle and resistance that says no to scapegoating migrants, privatising the NHS and cutting welfare.

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Patients and staff hit hard

PATIENTS are supposed to wait no longer than four hours in accident and emergency (A&E) departments.

But the King’s Fund report shows that the number waiting more than four hours has shot up by 69 percent since last year.

Patients aren’t just having to wait longer. The number

left waiting in trolleys in A&E before being admitted into hospital was the highest for more than ten years.

The strain on the service is also hitting staff morale hard.

Poverty pay and rocketing workloads are pushing workers out of the NHS.

Attacks on their conditions will only make the crisis worse.

Chris Ham of King’s Fund

ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Has Syriza reached its moment of truth?

MANY COMMENTATORS argue that the Greek left government headed by Syriza is heading towards the moment of truth in its confrontation with the European Union.

Greece is due to make a £575 million debt repayment to the International Monetary Fund on Tuesday of next week. Will prime minister Alexis Tsipras concede the demand of Greece's creditors that he not only keep up debt repayments but implement neoliberal "reforms"?

According to labour minister Panos Kourletis, the International Monetary Fund is "unyielding on its demands for labour reforms, including pensions cuts, mass layoffs and resisting raising the minimum wage".

The indications are contradictory. On the one hand, the removal of finance minister Yanis Varoufakis as chief negotiator and his replacement by Euclid Tsakalotos has been taken as a sign that Tsipras is ready to cut a deal. Varoufakis is very unpopular with the eurozone finance ministers.

On the other hand, Tsipras said last week that "if the solution offered goes beyond our mandate, it will have to be endorsed by the people" in a referendum.

Some predict that, if Tsipras were nevertheless to compromise, Syriza would split with the powerful Left Platform breaking away to oppose further austerity. Personally I'm sceptical about this.

Historically when left governments change course and capitulate to capital, their left wing doesn't rebel. This was true of Tony Benn when Labour prime minister Harold Wilson demoted him and imposed wage controls in the summer of 1975. Jean-Pierre Chevenement did resign when French president Francois Mitterrand embraced neoliberalism in 1983, but he soon rejoined the government.

Signal

There was another very telling signal last week. Tsipras was photographed in Nicosia, Cyprus, shaking hands with the Egyptian president, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, at a tripartite summit also involving the Greek Cypriot president Nicos Anastasiades.

According to Middle East Eye, "in a declaration, they said the 'scourge of international terrorism' now threatens Europe, the Gulf, and the Middle East and North Africa... The three agreed to jointly combat terrorism and violent extremism for the sake of security in the eastern Mediterranean, a region virtually encircled by conflicts."

"We are encouraged by the recent gains of the Iraqi forces in Iraq with the support of the anti-Isis international coalition," the statement said.

This is extraordinary. When a Europe-wide movement against the "war on terrorism" was launched after the 9/11 attacks, one of the main constituents was the Greek Social Forum. This body is often praised as one of the laboratories of left unity from which the contemporary Syriza emerged.

The Egyptian Revolution of 25 January 2011 inspired many to imitate the occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo. One of the most important examples was provided by the occupation of Syntagma Square in Athens and of squares in other Greek cities and towns in the summer of 2011. Syriza was heavily involved in this.

So it's shocking to see Tsipras shake the hand of the butcher el-Sisi, architect of the Egyptian counter-revolution, and pledge his government's support for the latest phase of the "war on terrorism".

The summit reflects the competition between states in the eastern Mediterranean over access to the energy reserves located mainly undersea. Those off Cyprus have seen Greece, southern Cyprus, and Israel square off against Turkey. The Independent Balkan News Agency quotes a south Cyprus government spokesperson saying, "A trilateral summit of Greece, Cyprus and Israel is being planned".

This development confirms that Tsipras's coalition with the right wing Independent Greeks wasn't just about getting a parliamentary majority. Like them, he wants to assert the interests of Greek capitalism in the eastern Mediterranean.

But maybe we should see also the summit as part of Tsipras's negotiations with the European Union. He's signalling to them that he can be relied on to defend the existing imperialist order in the Mediterranean. But defeating austerity requires challenging this order, not reinforcing it.

TUSC shows there is a real alternative to voting for cuts

by NICK CLARK

TRADE UNIONIST and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) parliamentary candidates have stood in seats across the country for Thursday's general election.

They have used their election campaigns to strengthen the resistance to racism and austerity after the election.

In Tottenham, north London, candidate Jenny Sutton held a final rally for her supporters on Wednesday of last week.

She talked about the important task of building an alternative to austerity.

"The Tories and the Lib Dems and the Labour Party all say that there is no alternative to austerity," she said. "That message has been a consistent feature of the last five years."

Alternative

"London is a city of multi-millionaires. And yet a million people are using food banks. In Tottenham people are being driven down. And all the main parties are saying there is no alternative. We have to say that there is an alternative."

Jenny explained how Labour-controlled Haringey Council's plan to demolish council houses to make way for expensive flats was pushing poor people out of Tottenham.

She argued that's why we need a left alternative to Labour that will continue the fight after the election.

She said, "David Lammy has tried to distance himself from Haringey Council. But



BACK STORY

TUSC candidates are standing up to racism and austerity

- More than 130 TUSC parliamentary candidates will contest this Thursday's general election

- Over 600 candidates are also standing for TUSC in council seats

that raises the question of the Labour Party.

"If they had a strategy for resisting austerity, that would mean mobilising people in the trade unions and the community."

She added, "We have to take as big a chunk out of Lammy's vote as we can. He cannot be allowed to take our community for granted."

TUSC CANDIDATE Angela McCormick (front, right) campaigning against zero hours contracts

PICTURE: JOSH BROWN

"I'm the only candidate who after the election is still going to be here working with the community."

"TUSC is a resistance vote. We are there to say what is going on in parliament is corrupt. Our interests are not being represented by these people."

Other TUSC campaigns have also provided an alternative for people fed up with Labour.

Looking

Simon Hickman is the TUSC candidate for Manchester Gorton. He told Socialist Worker, "I've had people calling round my house wanting to find out more because they're looking for something different. They're traditional

Labour voters, and they've had enough."

"Even Labour Party members know there's got to be a change—and if their party doesn't change they'll just move on."

Simon explained that the TUSC campaign had helped to lay the groundwork for resistance to austerity after the election.

He said, "We're going to have a TUSC public meeting within a week of the election."

"We've made some really good connections, which will be useful after the election. And we're already known from fights to save the swimming baths and libraries."

"The election's not the end of it—it's the beginning."

tusc.org.uk

Militant campaigns put down roots in local areas

TUSC CANDIDATES have built vibrant and militant campaigns rooted in their communities and kept up the fight for votes right until polling day.

Jon Woods, TUSC candidate for Portsmouth North, told Socialist Worker, "We were campaigning in town last Saturday when we bumped into Tory candidate Penny Mordaunt with the Tory leader of the council and their campaign team."

"We were able to drown her out with the megaphone—we blasted them with anti-Tory stuff. They were getting



Jon Woods' (centre) campaign in Portsmouth celebrates an encounter with Tory Penny Mordaunt last weekend

really pissed off with being challenged in public".

Lynne Chamberlain is TUSC candidate for the south London seat of Greenwich and Woolwich.

She told Socialist Worker how her campaign had helped her to make links with people who want to join the fightback. She said, "I've got an

email from someone from a Somali group here."

"There's a couple of people in the group who changed their minds about voting Labour after seeing my leaflet."

"Now they want to have a meeting with me. A few people seem more familiar with us now."

Barnsley Central candidate Dave Gibson reports a similar experience.

He told Socialist Worker, "You get the sense that there's a significant minority who know what TUSC is."

"That's a major breakthrough."

HILLSBOROUGH INQUESTS

Top cop ‘tried to concoct a story of drunken fans’

by SADIE ROBINSON

A FORMER chief inspector was part of an internal police group tasked with blaming football fans for the Hillsborough disaster, a court has heard.

Some 96 Liverpool fans died as a result of the 1989 disaster.

John Barry and Mark Ellaby gave evidence to fresh inquests into their deaths last week.

They were on a part time business course with then chief inspector Norman Bettison at the time of the disaster.

John Barry told the court, “Norman said, I’ve been asked by my senior officers to pull together the South Yorkshire Police evidence for the inquiry.

“We’re going to try and concoct a story that all of the Liverpool fans were drunk and that we were afraid they were going to break down the gates so we decided to open them.”

Mark Ellaby described a separate conversation involving Bettison and other students.

He told the court that Bettison said he’d been put on an internal SYP team “tasked with making sure that South Yorkshire Police (SYP) bore no blame for the Hillsborough disaster and it was all the fault of the drunken Liverpool supporters.”

Evidence

Sir Norman Bettison began giving evidence to the inquests on Thursday of last week.

He said he discussed the disaster with other students but “did not express any view about the cause”.

Bettison was part of a team that prepared the SYP proof of evidence for the 1989-1990 Taylor inquiry.

The court was shown a fax about policing at Hillsborough dated 3 July 1989, which Bettison sent to SYP barrister Mr Woodward.

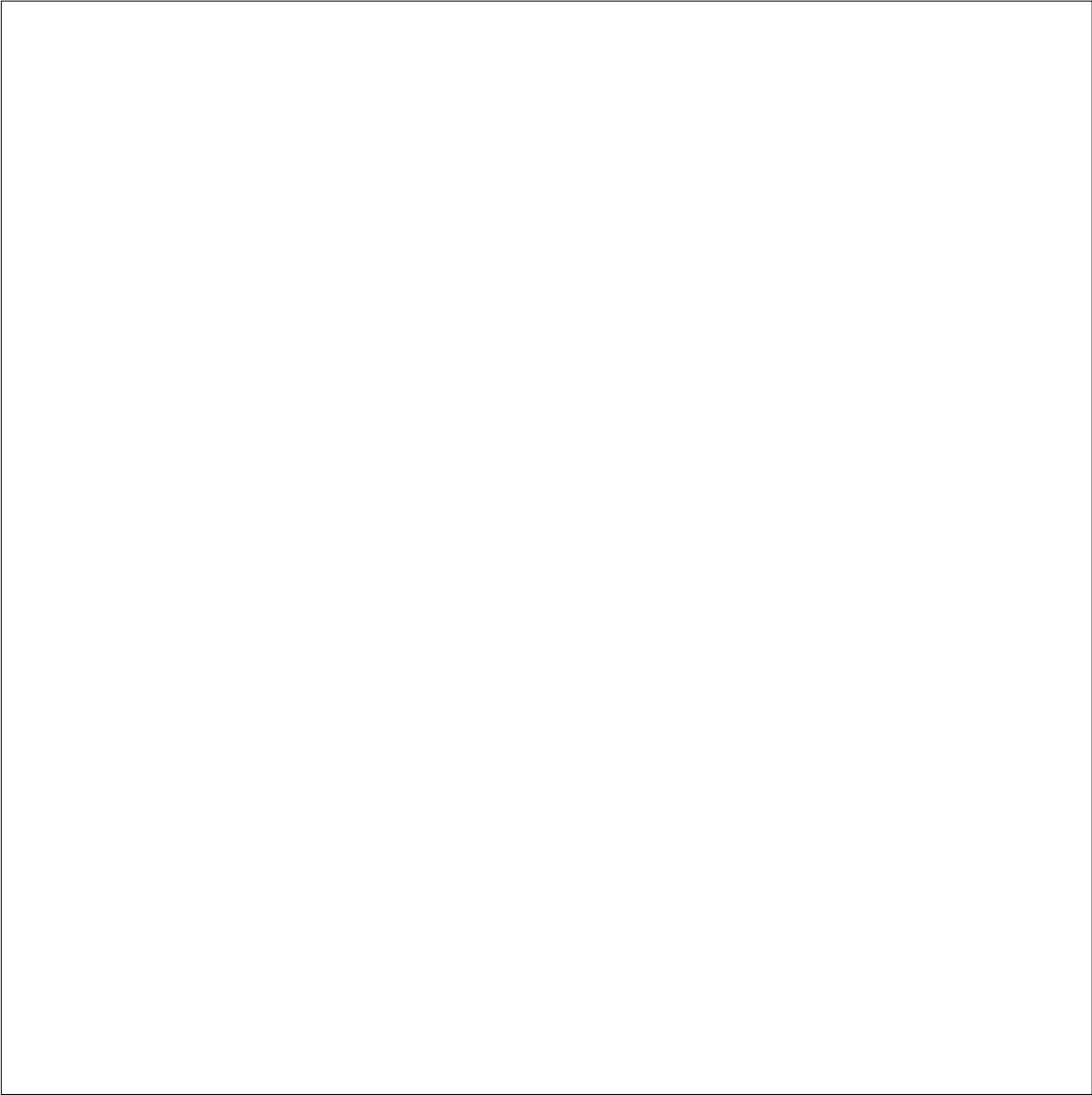
It included the point, “Overwhelmed by late and joint arrival of supporters, many of whom were determined to undermine the police operation”.

The note set out criticisms of the police that were difficult to counter. It said, “No steps were taken to make plans for the intake of the 2,000 supporters”.

It added, “No attempt was made to monitor the movement of the fans inside the ground. No plan was made for systematic opening of gates (‘open the gates’ appeared to have been a panic reaction).”

Bettison said he obeyed more senior officers.

He was promoted to superintendent in October 1989. Bettison agreed that a superintendent would be “rather a senior person to be just



THE HILLSBOROUGH stadium on the day of the disaster

a link in the chain”.

He wrote a report recording a meeting in the House of Commons with 12 MPs in early November. It said a parliamentary debate on the Taylor inquiry had been postponed.

At least two Tory MPs were disappointed as it could “diminish the impact of their ‘promised’ attack” upon its findings.

Bettison agreed that SYP sought to put forward witnesses who would be “likely to describe large numbers of ticketless fans or fans behaving in a drunken way”. He did not think this was wrong “per se”.

In 2012 Bettison said that the disaster was mainly caused by lack of police control but fans’ behaviour “made the job of the police harder”.

He said it was wrong to say it “at that time” but that it “was a summary of my honestly held beliefs”.

Bettison was due to continue giving evidence as Socialist Worker went to press.

Letters shown in court

JOHN MERVYN Jones gave evidence to the Hillsborough inquests last week. He was assistant chief constable of West Midlands Police when it investigated South Yorkshire Police (SYP) in the wake of the disaster.

Jones wrote to the government legal body Treasury Solicitors on 9 June 1989 about Everton supporters at another match on the day of the Hillsborough disaster.

The letter said, “I had not previously experienced dealing with supporters in such great number who had consumed so much alcohol. “The accounts that I

have read on Liverpool supporters’ behaviour at Hillsborough show some remarkable coincidences which may indicate some Liverpool characteristic.”

Former SYP solicitor Peter Metcalf also gave evidence.

The solicitors removed references to the closure of the tunnel to pens 3 and 4 from SYP’s proof of evidence.

The court was shown a letter written by Metcalf to the insurers. It said that SYP “have been contacting other police forces asking for comments about the behaviour of Liverpool fans arriving without tickets for all-ticket matches.”

KINGSLEY BURRELL

Cops used ‘shocking’ methods

A MENTAL health nurse told the inquest into the death of Kingsley Burrell that he found the police’s method for removing restraints “alarming and shocking”.

Kingsley died in Birmingham’s Queen Elizabeth Hospital in 2011.

Four days earlier he had called 999 to report that a gang was harassing him while he was out with his five year old son.

The police took him into custody and detained him in a mental health unit before he was transferred to the hospital where he died.

Richard Lucas told the court how one of four police officers “knelt on Kingsley’s back between his shoulder blades” to remove handcuffs and leg restraints in the mental health unit’s seclusion room.

He said officers punched Kingsley’s thighs “with a lot of force”. He described their use of the butt of a police baton.

He said, “These were



Kingsley Burrell

methods that I had never seen before—they were alarming and shocking.”

Lucas said police asked him and another worker to remove the restraints. He declined as neither had any training in mechanical restraint.

He also described how Kingsley was wheeled into the unit with a blanket over his head.

He said when his colleague asked an ambulance worker why this was the case, they replied it was because he had been spitting.

Lucas said he had known for the past two years that it was current policy to make sure patients’ faces were never covered in order to monitor them properly.

The Crown Prosecution Service found “insufficient evidence” to charge any of the 12 people with Kingsley’s death.

They included four West Midlands police officers, two West Midlands ambulance staff, three nurses and three doctors.

The inquest continues.



UNITED STATES

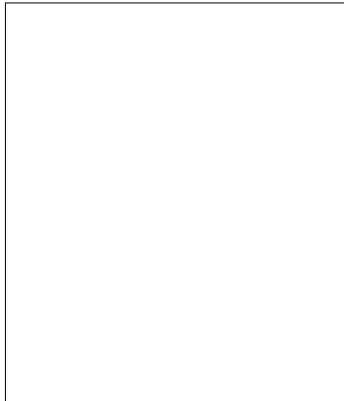
Baltimore cops are charged

PROTESTERS CHEERED when they heard that the six police officers who arrested Freddie Gray in Baltimore are being charged over his death.

Campaigner Safi Edwards told Socialist Worker, "I live three blocks from Penn North where everything is taking place. I was excited when I heard about the charges. But now they're all out on bail. And their bail was £231,000 while some of the youth that broke car windows had £331,000."

Thousands of people had protested and rioted for nearly a week over Freddie's death (see pages 10 and 11). When the charges were announced crowds celebrated on the streets, the curfew was lifted and the National Guard withdrawn.

The officers face a number of charges including "involuntary manslaughter". But it is a long



Protesting against police racism

way from officers being charged to anyone getting convicted over the killing.

The brutal policing connects to a racist history of suppressing black people. Institutional racism is key to the case, though in this majority black city, three of the six cops are black.

Safi said the solution isn't about people in the poor areas changing themselves.

She said, "First of all we need more money. They are building up certain parts of Baltimore.

"They just built a multi-million dollar casino, yet you have children in schools who have to share their text book with three other students.

"These kids don't feel the community is theirs. That's why they don't mind burning it down."

But she added that hope came out of the protests. "For the first time in my life I've seen the whole community come together," she said. "There were gang members with their faces covered. We felt safe right next to them for the first time."

Ken Olende

Anger in Nepal as global powers compete over aid

by YURI PRASAD

NEPAL IS gripped by growing anger more than a week after the earthquake that has so far claimed more than 6,600 lives.

Thousands of homeless people are sleeping under tents and tarpaulins in the towns and cities, most denied basic sanitation, food and water.

They may well be among the lucky ones.

With monsoon rains expected within a few days many thousands more don't even have a piece of plastic over their heads.

The Nepali government says it needs 400,000 tents immediately. So far it has only been able to provide just 29,000.

The danger of a disease epidemic stalks the capital, Kathmandu.

But the situation in rural areas is far worse.

Flattened

Many remote villages flattened by the quake have no road access.

And some have not received any aid.

Even the small number of helicopters flying in supplies can find it difficult to reach areas that have been deliberately isolated by decades of government policy.

In the years of Maoist guerrilla resistance to the monarchist dictatorship the countryside was seen as the source of resistance.

It was deliberately starved of investment, such as roads.

Foreign governments are keen to be seen in action and say that remote areas are their priority.

But often their aid reflects strategic rather than humanitarian ambitions.

Nepal lies between China and India, two countries that have

MANY NEPALESE villages have still not received aid—and monsoon rains are imminent

frequently engaged in border skirmishes and even a war.

The Indian government wasted no time despatching 13 military transport aircraft carrying 300 personnel, along with military helicopters.

China responded with a large search and rescue team, 170 soldiers and promises of millions of dollars in aid.

The US wants in on the act. Its military forces helped maintain Nepal's dictatorship until 2006 when

popular rebellion forced its collapse.

Now president Barack Obama's "Pivot to Asia" strategy sees China as the main military threat to US world dominance.

That means Nepal is vital territory to the US.

Some 500 US troops are set to go to Nepal and join the heavy aircraft that arrived this week.

US special forces were already on the ground prior to the quake conducting "special training exercises".

All the foreign powers fear that

resentment against the government and its failures could spill over into rebellion.

And that instability could spark wider conflicts.

Sushil Koirala, the 75 year old prime minister, was out of the country when the quake hit.

On his return last week he was chased through Kathmandu by an angry mob demanding more action from his paralysed government.

The fury of the poor could grow as the rains begin to fall.

ISRAEL

Ethiopians fight racism

by NICK CLARK

THOUSANDS OF Jewish Africans protested against racism and police brutality in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem on Thursday and Sunday of last week.

The protests broke out after the release of video footage showing police beating an Israeli soldier of Ethiopian descent.

Thousands of protesters blocked a major road in Tel Aviv during last Sunday's protest.

Police attacked protesters in both cities with shock grenades, water cannon and tear gas.

Racism is integral to Israeli society.

It is mainly used to oppress Palestinians living inside Israel, as well as East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

But that racism is also directed at Jewish Africans and migrants living in Israel.

Tens of thousands of Jewish Ethiopians fleeing famine and war were airlifted into Israel in 1984 and 1991.

But the 135,500 Ethiopians living in Israel today face racism and discrimination.

This has been exacerbated by racism whipped up by Israeli politicians against non-Jewish African refugees seeking asylum in Israel.

YEMEN

Saudi troops seen in Aden

AROUND 100 Saudi-led ground troops have arrived in the Yemeni port of Aden.

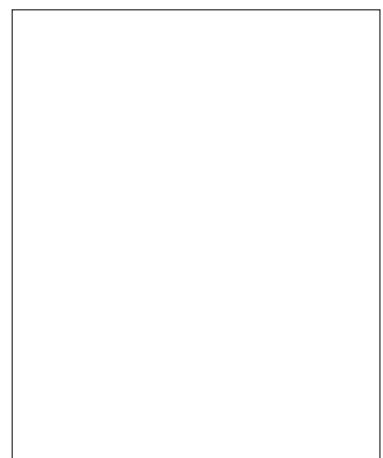
Saudi Arabia denies they are the vanguard of a ground invasion.

The Saudi Arabian air assault on Yemen is aimed at removing the Houthi militia that has taken control of the capital.

The Saudi leadership said the air strikes would be followed by a ground invasion.

But the strikes have failed to dislodge the Houthis. And plans for an invasion appeared to be faltering.

At least 1,200 people have died in air strikes, and the war has displaced thousands more.



A Saudi Arabian soldier

Our fight is global

I READ Socialist Worker online week after week. There is so much I have learned from your commentary and articles.

I come from a working class family.

My sister and I are the first in the family to attend college or university.

We do not forget our origins. We see on a daily basis what neoliberalism is doing in our country, our region and our world.

I want to read more about the fight against capitalism. Huge challenges are awaiting the working people.

Fernando Dan A Mattos
Montevideo, Uruguay

Boycott unfair tests

SCHOOLS ARE being blackmailed by the government to implement baseline testing.

They will be under even greater threat of being turned into an academy and poor grades from the regulator, Ofsted, if they can't meet the targets.

The "preferred provider" for many local authorities, Early Excellence, sells itself as similar to the well-regarded foundation stage process that schools already complete.

But this is putting a respectable veneer onto a practice that the rest of the profession is united against.

They have repackaged what we do already and are selling it back to us.

We need to mount huge campaigns, such as those in the US where mass opt-outs of tests are taking place.

Sara Tomlinson
South London

Reclaim the game from football's money men

WITH MORE money in football than ever before it is a disgrace that more is not going into reducing obscene ticket prices.

What was once seen as the sport of the working class is becoming a sport that a lot of people can no longer attend.

The campaign against this took a step forward with a successful boycott by Liverpool fans of their match against Hull City.

The boycott was



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Stop radicalisation in our schools—keep the army out

ACTOR PETER Firth dared to suggest on the BBC's One Show last week that young Muslims might want to fight abroad, however misguided, for the same reasons that young people might want to join the armed forces here.

He said he thought that it was a sense of "rightness", again adding, "however misguided".

This is a rare occasion in the mainstream media where the narrative around so-called "radicalisation" has been challenged.

I cannot see any difference between young people joining, sometimes compulsorily, Combined Cadet Forces (CCF) at schools and a young Muslim who decides to fight for an Islamic

organisation.

If it's "radicalisation" for young Muslims then it's "radicalisation" for those who are lured into the forces in this country.

Well done Peter Firth for swimming against the stream.

The BBC defence correspondent Frank Gardner clearly felt that he had to intervene on this dose of reason by saying that "at least the British Army tries to weed out psychopaths".

Hopefully we'll hear more reasoned commentary on this issue.

Perhaps all adverts for the forces, often placed in the intervals of big football matches where thousands of youngsters will be watching, could be scrapped. In the same way that

cigarette adverts have on the grounds of a danger of leading to the possibility of an early death.

Perhaps all cadet groups at schools could be abandoned and all visits to schools by the military could be stopped.

I was in the CCF at my school in London back in the mid 1960s and, regrettably, joined the Royal Navy having just turned 16.

I am acutely aware of the absolute nonsense being poured out about so-called "radicalisation" ably supported by the police and security services via programmes such as the much despised and discredited 'Prevent'.

I call it Islamophobia.

David Clinch
Torrington

Rulers' shame over Armenia

OUR RULERS like to "honour" those whom their forbears sent to their deaths during the First World War.

They overlook the Armenian genocide in which 1.5 million Armenians were massacred by the Ottoman empire.

Turkey refuses to admit that genocide took place. It is to the great shame



of Britain and the US that they continue to remain silent over the genocide.

Turkey is too useful a Nato ally.

In London recently 2,000-3,000 British

Armenians and their anti-racist supporters marched through central London, laying their own wreaths at the Cenotaph.

Sabby Sagall
Central London

Just a thought...

Brand too soft on Miliband

CAN'T BELIEVE how soft Russell Brand is in his interview with Ed Miliband.

Given Labour capitulated to the racist neoliberal agenda long ago, I was hoping to see Ed get a well deserved grilling from Brand, who is usually on point politically.

Fran Manning
on Facebook

Russell to the rescue?

I THINK Russell Brand's position was that to be too hard on Ed Miliband would have damaged Labour during such a knife edge election.

I think it was a good move from Miliband though.

It did him some favours, although perhaps too little too late.

Stuart Curlett
on Facebook

Angry about austerity

GOOD FRONT page last week. (Socialist Worker, 2 May)

Ordinary people struggle, a million going to food banks. Bedroom taxes, cut backs, "We're all in it together".

But these people at the top double their wealth.

No to austerity. If you ain't angry you ain't been paying attention.

Daniel Kebede
Newcastle

Who will Clegg serve?

NICK CLEGG is going to be chief bottom wiper of either David Cameron or Ed Miliband.

We have to decide which.

Norma Buddle
West London

Islamophobia in France

THE CASE of a Muslim schoolgirl in France being sent home for wearing a skirt that is "too long" is blatant Islamophobia.

Ankle length skirts are a fashion item regardless of religion or culture.

Would a white Christian girl be sent home for wearing the same item?

Alice Clark
Newcastle

When cops in Baltimore arrested Freddie Gray and threw him screaming in pain into the back of their van, they thought no one would question their actions. When Freddie died in that same truck, they thought they'd get away with it. Not this time, writes **Ken Olende**

REVOLUTION begins when there's no resolution to a problem. When a person is beaten back into a corner and they've come to the conclusion that nobody cares about them," writer Ray L Brown told *Socialist Worker*.

"They can't call the police. They have been getting away with the way they treat people of colour for years."

Ray lives in Baltimore, Maryland, where Freddie Gray died last month (see right).

Police pre-empted the damning report into Freddie's death that led to officers being charged, with a leak that suggested he injured himself.

Black Lives Matter protests sprang up in Baltimore, linking the death to those of other black men who have died in police custody.

Freddie's death is just the latest episode.

"They're saying he broke his own back and crushed his own larynx. That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard," says Ray.

"I don't condone looting and burning, but I see a people who have just got tired of how they are treated. This isn't a black thing or a white thing. It's a police thing.

"They showed clips of kids throwing rocks at the police officers, but they didn't show the police officers had thrown rocks at the kids when they got off their school buses. When the kids retaliated now all of a sudden they're thugs.

"They didn't show the peaceful demonstrations or the people standing in front of stores to stop them being looted. So now all of a sudden Baltimore is under siege."

Water

Before the news of Freddie's death the big news in Baltimore was about water being cut off.

About 150 households a day are having their water cut off in Baltimore for being as little as £165 behind in payments. Commercial properties that fall behind with payments have not been cut off.

The city is blighted by poverty. The collapse of industry and the docks left many people unemployed.

Baltimore was once the second port on the US's east coast. It was an industrial city. From a peak of nearly a million in 1950 its population has declined to about 620,000. The black population grew from 24 percent in 1960 to 64 percent in 2000.

The authorities have cracked down on the poor.

The police have introduced curfews to stop the protests.

But a curfew on young people has been in place since 2014. It prohibits anyone under 14 being out after 9pm and anyone under 16 being out after 10pm on weekdays, or 11pm during the summer. Parents can be fined £330 if their children break curfew.

In a poor area like Sandtown where Freddie lived, 34 percent of residential property is vacant or abandoned.



DECADES OF government neglect means 16,000 properties across Baltimore are vacant or abandoned (above) Thousands have taken to streets of the city demanding an end to police racism (right)

Picture: PA

That's 16,000 buildings across the city—almost all in poor black neighbourhoods. The old docks have been renovated and are luxury, largely white, areas now.

Ray said, "All too often redevelopment has meant levelling poor neighbourhoods and replacing them with showpiece projects.

"They kicked those people out. Downtown Baltimore has been built up and has new stadiums. They want you to go there to see how grand the city is. But you drive past that and see there are areas that are not as grand. They left people no way to support themselves. What are they going to do?

"There is a shroud draped over the real problems in our communities. Any time there's a problem they hope that things will blow over and come back to normal. But after a period of abuse the person being attacked will reach a point when they are not prepared to be abused any more."

Mayor

Racism is a central issue here, but there is more to it. Baltimore is a majority black town with a black mayor, Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, a black police chief, Anthony Batts.

In the US, law enforcement is headed by the attorney general, which has been recently taken over by a black woman, Loretta Lynch.

"Being black doesn't mean that when you get into high office you understand," Ray said.

"People forget that they were ever part of that community. As mayor or police chief or even the president you spend all your time worrying about how to present yourself. But right is right and wrong is wrong."

Jean Cushman is an activist in Baltimore. She told *Socialist Worker*, "Kids in Baltimore are very badly disenfranchised. Resources are so tight in the US. It is clamping down on spending for schools and education.

"People have suspicion of the police. Even though the mayor is black and so are a good majority of the police they're still suspicious. They experience police abuse all the time."

Kristiana Rae Colón, activist from



BALTIMORE

HOW POVERTY AND POLICE RACISM IGNITED A CITY

the Let Us Breathe Collective, told *Socialist Worker* how that mistrust of the police was reflected in debates amongst protesters and activists.

She said, "Some activists want to see police punished and brought to justice for their excessive use of force in the short term.

"Others want police reform in the mid term—and many are calling for the abolition of police as we know them in the long term."

Ray is torn about how to respond to the police. He is outraged at their behaviour but believes there are good officers who are attempting to defend the community.

"Some police officers are fine. I know a few," he said.

The black mayor has referred to protesters as "thugs". This angers Ray. "As if a small group of thugs is responsible for the disorder," he said.

"We were told that two gangs said they'd come together and call a truce

to go start killing cops. But in fact the gangs called a truce to try and quell the situation. So they try to deflect the blame.

"The police chief appeared on national television saying how proud he was to meet officers who were injured when protesters threw rocks.

"Yet he said nothing about the fact that the guy his police arrested had his spine severed. They're quick to defend the boys in blue but not to defend the community."

Jean said, "This is a city where all the good jobs in manufacturing have gone away. That decimated Baltimore. The jobs aren't there and people don't have anything to do. There's a lot of reliance on drugs. It's a means of employment.

"People who have protested about the different killings are communicating. It's becoming a much bigger deal. Some people feel frightened by it, but they're mostly people from the

suburbs. They don't really have a relationship with black people. Baltimore is so segregated that you wouldn't believe it."

Kristiana believes that the different protests of the past few months are developing into a new movement.

She said, "The killing of Mike Brown in Ferguson and the sustained energy created by the protests have indeed sparked the new Black Lives Matter movement.

"Contemporary activists in the struggle to end racial injustice understand police brutality in the long trajectory of slavery, post Civil War Reconstruction, and Jim Crow."

Ray said, "To go forward we have to go back. When Rosa Parks said she

would not sit in the back of the bus they listened to her because the campaign shut the buses down. They're dependent on you and you can take that away."

He believes that "If people want change they need to take control of the money. Build your own communities and businesses, don't let the city take it away.

"There are no leaders in the African American community like Martin Luther King that this generation respects.

"They see what's going on but they don't see the pattern and if you don't understand the pattern you can't fix it.

"We need to educate ourselves. But I think that it will get worse before it gets better."

Ray L. Brown is producing a film 83 Days about the false conviction and execution of black teenager George Stinney Jr in 1944. pleromastudios.com



Baltimore exploded with riots on Saturday of last week

Picture: PA

Unity on streets is key to victory

FREDDIE Gray, a 25 year old black man, died of spinal injuries a week after being arrested by Baltimore police on 12 April.

He was cuffed on his hands and ankles but did not have a seatbelt on.

The first official investigation into the killing condemned the behaviour of the arresting officers. All six have been charged over his death (see page 8).

Among the issues to be explained are why it took 40 minutes after Freddie's arrest to drive him to the police station and why the van stopped five times along the short route.

Freddie had a spinal cord injury and a crushed larynx. He lapsed into a coma and died after a week.

The civil unrest broke out on the day of Freddie's funeral.

As schools finished in the afternoon police in full riot gear in the Mondawmin neighbourhood closed the subway station and would not allow school students to board buses and disperse.

One parent said, "The kids stood across from the police and looked like they were asking them 'why can't we get on the buses' but the police were just gazing."

Police said that the trapped people began to throw missiles at officers. This was when the disturbances began.

Black Lawyers for Justice president Malik Zulu Shabazz told the press that the police were responsible for the violence. He said, "I really think tonight if they weren't here, no crowd would be here.

"You know how Ferguson was. The more armoured



Freddie Gray

police show up, the more people want to stay out and challenge them."

One local said of the burning down of a pharmacy during the rioting, "It was wrong, but it was right. They can rebuild that, but they can't bring that mother's son back."

Protests continued daily. More than 200 people were arrested in the disturbances on Monday of last week. Police bail for people

arrested in the unrest was set at levels many could not hope to pay, such as £330,200.

The habeus corpus law in the state of Maryland says that no one can be detained without charge for more than 24 hours.

But Republican governor Larry Hogan effectively suspended this.

Hogan also brought in 1,500 National Guard troops and a nightly 10pm curfew for a week, though this was suspended after the officers were charged.

As more than 1,000 protesters marched through the city on Wednesday, municipal employees came out of their offices to show support.

One of them told journalists, "To see this unity...it portrays to the world that what you see on TV is not what Baltimore is about."



Who do they serve and protect? Growing numbers in the US question the role of the police in the system

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7819 1170 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER }
BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

ABERDEEN

Why do socialists oppose fracking?

Thu 14 May, 7pm,
The Snug, Ma Cameron's,
6-8 Little Belmont St,
AB10 1JG

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

Migrant lives matter—stop the slaughter in the Mediterranean

Thu 14 May, 7pm,
Quaker Meeting House,
Priory Rooms, 40 Bull St,
B4 6AF

BOLTON

Migrant lives matter—stop the slaughter in the Mediterranean

Wed 13 May, 6.30pm,
Bolton Socialist Club,
16 Wood St (off
Bradshawgate), BL1 1DY

BRIGHTON

Blacklisting—the victimisation of activists

Wed 13 May, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Ship St, BN1 1AF

BRISTOL: NORTH

From Selma to Baltimore—the fight against racism in the US

Thu 21 May, 7.30pm,
The Canteen, 5th Floor,
Hamilton House,
80 Stokes Croft, BS1 3QY

BRISTOL: SOUTH

May 1968, the fire last time—when students and workers united

Wed 20 May, 7.30pm,
YHA, 14 Narrow Quay,
BS1 4QA

CHELMSFORD

How do we fight for women's liberation?

Thu 21 May, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Rainsford Rd, CM1 2QL

COVENTRY

What are the roots of terrorism?

Wed 13 May, 7.30pm,
West Indian Centre,
159 Spon St,
CV1 3BB

DERBY

Migrant lives matter—stop the slaughter in the Mediterranean

Thu 14 May, 7pm,
West End Community Centre,
Mackworth Rd (next to Britannia Mill),
DE22 3BL

DORCHESTER

Socialists and elections

Sat 9 May, 12 noon,
Colliton Club (opposite
County Hall),
Colliton Park,
DT1 1XJ

EDINBURGH

Isis and counter-revolution—a Marxist analysis

Wed 13 May, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria Terrace,
EH1 2JL

GLASGOW: SOUTH

50 years since his assassination—the legacy of Malcolm X

Thu 14 May, 7.30pm,
Govanhill Baths,
99 Calder St,
G42 7RA

LONDON: EALING

What do socialists say about the EU?

Wed 27 May, 7.30pm,
W3 Gallery,
185 Acton High St,
W3 9DJ

LONDON: KINGSTON

What do we mean by class?

Wed 13 May, 7pm,
Kingston Quaker Centre,
Fairfield East,
KT1 2PT

SOCIALIST WORKER PUBLIC MEETINGS

Fighting racism and austerity
Where next after the elections?

BARNSELY

Thu 14 May, 7.30pm,
YMCA, Blucher St,
S70 1AP

BRADFORD

Wed 13 May, 7pm,
Equity Centre,
Perkin House,
82 Grattan Rd,
BD1 2LU

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

Thu 21 May, 7pm,
Quaker Meeting House,
Priory Rooms,
40 Bull St, B4 6AF

BRISTOL

Thu 14 May, 7.30pm,
The Canteen, 5th Floor,
Hamilton House,
80 Stokes Croft,
BS1 3QY

CARDIFF

Wed 13 May, 7.30pm,
Cathays Community Centre,
Cathays Terrace,
CF24 4HX

CAMBRIDGE

Thu 14 May, 7.30pm,
Shanghai Family Restaurant,
39 Burleigh St, CB1 1DG

COVENTRY

Wed 20 May, 7.30pm,
West Indian Centre,
159 Spon St, CV1 3BB

DERBY

Thu 21 May, 7pm,
West End Community Centre,

Mackworth Rd
(next to Britannia Mill),
DE22 3BL

DONCASTER

Wed 13 May, 7.30pm,
Women's Centre,
21 Cleveland St,
DN1 3EH

ESSEX

Thu 14 May, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Rainsford Rd, CM1 2QL

EXETER

Thu 14 May, 7pm,
New Horizon Cafe,
47 Longbrook St,
EX4 6AW

HOME COUNTIES

Wed 27 May, 7.30pm,
Trinity Church Hall (upstairs),
1 Beaconsfield Rd
(near St Albans City station),
AL1 3RD

HUDDERSFIELD

Wed 13 May, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade
(near train and bus stations),
HD1 5JP

IPSWICH

Tue 2 Jun, 7pm,
Labour Club,
33-35 Silent St, IP1 1TF

LANCASTER

Thu 14 May, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Meeting House Lane,
LA1 1TX

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Thu 21 May, 7pm,
Room 3, The Swarthmore
Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

LEICESTER

Wed 13 May, 7pm,
Leicester Adult
Education College,
2 Wellington St, LE1 6HL

LIVERPOOL

Thu 14 May, 7pm,
The Brink Cafe,
21 Parr St (near Concert
Square), L1 4JN

LONDON: CENTRAL

Thu 14 May, 7pm,
Theatro Technis,
26 Crowndale Rd,
NW1 1TT

LONDON: HACKNEY

Thu 14 May, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner
Lower Clapton Rd),
E5 0PU

LONDON: NORTH

Wed 13 May, 7.30pm,
North London
Community House,
22 Moorfield Rd.,
Tottenham, N17 6PY

LONDON: SOUTH

Wed 13 May, 7pm,
Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Rd (near Effra Rd,
facing Windrush Square),
SW2 1EP

MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE

What would real democracy look like?

Thu 14 May, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St,
M2 5NS

ROTHERHAM

Migrant lives matter—stop the slaughter in the Mediterranean

Wed 20 May, 7pm,

LONDON: WEST

Wed 20 May, 7.30pm,
West London Trade
Union Club,
33-35 Acton High St,
W3 6ND

MANCHESTER

Thu 21 May, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St,
M2 5NS

MEDWAY

Thu 14 May, 7.30pm,
The Nucleus Arts Centre,
Conference Room,
272 High St,
Chatham,
ME4 4BP

NEWCASTLE

Thu 14 May, 7pm,
Heaton Community Centre,
Trewitt Rd, NE6 5DY

NORWICH

Thu 14 May, 7.30pm,
Vauxhall Centre,
Johnson Place,
NR2 2SA

NOTTINGHAM

Wed 13 May, 7.30pm,
International
Community Centre,
61b Mansfield Rd,
NG1 3FN

PORTSMOUTH

Wed 13 May, 7.30pm,
Somerstown Central,
Rivers St,
PO5 4EY

Talbot Lane Methodist Church,
Moorgate St, S60 2EY

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

The Westminster elite—is the old party system dying?

Thu 14 May, 7.30pm,
Central United
Reformed Church,
60 Norfolk St (near Crucible
Theatre), S1 2JB

YORK

The role of the revolutionary paper—why we sell Socialist Worker

Wed 13 May, 7.30pm,
Sea Horse Hotel,
4 Fawcett St,
YO10 4AH

{ MOVEMENT EVENTS }

LONDON

Detroit 67: The Year That Changed Soul

With author Stuart Cosgrove
Mon 11 May 6.30pm,
Bookmarks Bookshop,
1 Bloomsbury St, WC1B 3QE

£2. To reserve your place
call 020 7637 1848

A Socialist History of the French Revolution

With Mitchell Abidor

SOUTHAMPTON

Wed 13 May, 7.30pm,
High Street Cafe,
153 High St, SO14 2BT

WIGAN

Wed 13 May, 7pm,
Little Fifteen pub,
17-19 Wallgate
(opposite Wigan Post Office),
WN1 1LD

WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

Thu 14 May, 7.30pm,
Grain Store,
King St, WV1 1ST

YORK

Wed 20 May, 7.30pm,
Sea Horse Hotel,
4 Fawcett St,
YO10 4AH



LONDON: SOUTHWARK

Tell me why I don't like Mondays—Marx's theory of alienation

Thu 21 May, 7pm,
Snug Room, The Grand Union,
26 Camberwell Grove (off
Camberwell Church St),
SE5 8RE

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

The role of the revolutionary paper—why we sell

Socialist Worker

Wed 13 May, 7.30pm,
Quaker Meeting House,
1a Jewel Rd (off Hoe St),
E17 4QU

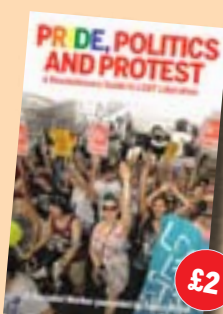
MANCHESTER: CHORLTON

The fire this time—rebellion in Baltimore

Wed 13 May, 7pm,
Proof Bar,
30 Manchester Rd,
M21 0BQ

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French rom-com shines light on lives of 'illegal' immigrants

Samba combines the powerful tale of a worker's struggle against deportation with a romantic comedy that doesn't quite gel, writes **Tomáš Tengely-Evans**

DIRECTORS OLIVER Nakache and Eric Toledano's new French-language film Samba is a powerful drama about a Senegalese worker threatened with deportation.

The film opens in a surreal way, with what looks like a scene out of a 1920s Prohibition era party.

Men in sharp suits and women in vintage dresses attempt to do the Charleston to terrible music.

It becomes clear that it's a posh wedding party, but then we follow the waiters into the depths of the kitchen.

Here we're introduced to Samba (Omar Sy), who works cash in hand washing the dishes.

While slow to start, this sequence draws you into the film. It juxtaposes the extravagance of the rich with the precarious life of migrant workers.

Following Samba's story makes the drama really compelling.

He's worked in kitchens "illegally" for more than ten years, but was finally offered a permanent contract by his boss.

Thinking that this will help his immigration case, Samba takes it to the border office.

He's forced to queue for hours waiting to hand in the papers. But we see little acts of solidarity, as Samba keeps another migrant's place who's been standing for hours.

Racist

His reward for trying to go legal is arrest by the racist border cops. Samba is thrown in detention and faces deportation.

The other lead character Alice (Charlotte Gainsbourg) has taken a sabbatical to do charity work as an immigration case worker.

When her and a colleague walk into the immigration detention centre, she's clearly nervous and out of her depth.

Her colleague calls the immigration service "bastards" for arresting Samba. "Should I take that down too," Alice asks genuinely.

It's from this first meeting that Samba and Alice begin to fall for each other.

The bullying way the immigration cops are presented makes clear whose side the film is on.

We also see the diversity of the French working class, often played down in the mainstream.

The film is based on a powerful story. But the romantic comedy aspect, while not terrible in itself, doesn't quite fit with it.

Samba
Directed by Oliver Nakache and Eric Toledano
Koch Media
Out now

Community theatre



GREG HICKS plays The Clarion's reactionary editor

A clarion call against the gutter press

THEATRE

CLARION

Written by Mark Jagasia
Arcola Theatre,
London E8 3DL.
£19/£15, arcolatheatre.com
Until 16 May

IF YOU hate the British tabloids, then you'll love writer Mark Jagasia's new play Clarion.

It's a hilarious and vitriolic exposure of their poisonous diet of racism, xenophobia and nationalism.

And its warning that scapegoating has consequences is all too relevant in this period of imperialist war and the rise of Ukip.

Jagasia, with years of experience at national dailies, brings a pen dipped in acid with concise language and sharp humour.

It all makes a scathing satire set in the offices of the worst paper in the land.

The Clarion's owner, a man resident in Monaco, made his money in pornography. Now who might that refer to?

He favours a constant flow of toxic immigration scare stories.

The head office suit, a sanctimonious hypocrite, enforces the owner's every whim with the threat of redundancy.

The editor, a paranoid and reactionary Little Englander, bullies his staff.

The contemporary world of work meets the gutter politics of the red tops.

Supported by excellent ensemble acting, Greg Hicks gives an excellent performance as the editor.

And Clare Higgins is magisterial as the fading star reporter, who clings onto shreds of integrity.

I've never witnessed an audience laugh out loud so unreservedly or applaud a cast, who clearly enjoyed their roles, so enthusiastically.

Don't miss this five star treat, served up in a renowned, community-based political theatre.

John Baker

EXHIBITION

LEON GOLUB—BITE YOUR TONGUE

Serpentine Gallery,
London W2 3XA.
Until 17 May
Free
serpentinegalleries.org

LEON GOLUB'S work took aim at the US imperialist interventions in Latin America during the 1980s.

It maintains its power and relevance today.

The US is launching another war in the Middle East, while the National Guard and riot police crack down on protesters in Baltimore and other US cities.

Golub's 1980s series Interrogation and



Leon Golub's Henry Kissinger

Mercenaries deals with the different US-backed murder squads.

The canvases' wall-like size alone makes the paintings imposing.

Golub's rough style comes across as grainy film footage, which makes them so vivid their bright backgrounds menace your eyes.

They're angry and political, but paint an image of a brutal world with little hope.

TOP 5 BOOKS

Bestsellers at Bookmarks, the socialist Bookshop

- 1 **Ukip—the Ugly Face of Politics**
- 2 **Blacklisted—the Secret War Between Big Business and Union Activists**
Dave Smith and Phil Chamberlain
- 3 **CLR James in Hackney**
Gaverne Bennett and Christian Hogsbjerg
- 4 **This Changes Everything—Capitalism vs the Climate**
Naomi Klein
- 5 **Detroit '67—the Year that Changed Soul**
Stuart Cosgrove

Phone 020 7637 1848
bookmarksbookshop.co.uk
Why not visit the shop at 1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QE

When ever there's a suggestion of a policy that can make workers' lives better, the response is the same.

The bosses and the right wing press insist in chorus, "You can't buck the market".

We saw this in the fury directed at Ed Miliband's recent suggestion of very limited rent controls—a cap on "excessive rent rises".

Simon Agace, chairman of the upmarket Winkworth estate agents, was incredulous, warning of "damage done on the provision and quality of property in London".

This is the mantra of the ruling class. They claim that what 18th century economist Adam Smith called the "invisible hand" of the market is the most efficient method of allocating resources.

It follows that interfering with the market ends either in disaster or futility. So we can't have rent controls because bosses would stop building houses and create more homelessness.

Higher wages? That would price workers out of jobs and make unemployment go up. Taxing the rich would just see them taking away their wealth—and our jobs.

On the other hand they say that the market gives power to the people. As consumers we make free choices that decide what gets produced.

But the reality is very different. The market routinely fails, and the housing crisis gripping Britain is a good example.

Millions of people desperately need better homes. But construction firms can make more profit building for the rich.

Waste

Capitalist production isn't about meeting human needs but increasing bosses' profits. It creates massive abundance and waste alongside dire scarcity.

We see this in food too. Human agriculture produces more food than ever before. Yet amid this plenty millions of people are starving.

This isn't new. The revolutionary Karl Marx explained how the "anarchy of the market" and its "violent price fluctuations" could "cause interruptions, great collisions, even catastrophes, in the process".

But the market hype is part of a much bigger ideology that says we can't fundamentally change our society.

Even when its shortcomings are exposed, we're told there is no alternative—and that "market forces" will punish any attempt to create one.

This is clearly the lesson that our rulers want us to draw from Greece. They threaten its left government with capital flight and bank runs if it breaks with austerity.

And at almost every election



CAN WE BUCK THE MARKET?

We're told that market forces run the world, and can't be beaten even when they fail us. But **Tomáš Tengely-Evans** argues that a better way is both necessary and possible



Adam Smith

here we're told that unless the Tories get in, the financial markets would turn on Britain.

Many on the left recognise the limits of the market's ability to meet our needs, but see no potential to break with it.

So they look to the government to protect workers from the ravages of the market, and prevent the chaos of its crises.

This follows the theories of liberal economist John Maynard Keynes. He argued that the market

we think they can fix capitalism. On the contrary, the left Keynesians' argument often rests on a myth.

They hark back to the post-war period of nationalisations. But this was underpinned by the longest boom in capitalist history—and fell apart when boom turned into bust.

Keynesian ideas fell out of fashion in the 1970s, then revived after the 2008 financial crash. But this was caused by a fundamental crisis of profitability in capitalism that tougher banking regulation wouldn't have stopped.

THE GAINS that the working class won after the Second World War—in health, housing and welfare—can show up the hypocrisy of today's austerity.

But the left shouldn't play into the bosses' myth that there is such a thing as a pure free market, with no planning or state involvement.

Giant firms such as Asda, Ford or McDonalds are planned economies in their own right. They organise complex logistics on a vast scale. They just do it for the sake of profit.

It's nonsense when the right tries to claim government meddling is to blame for capitalism's problems. But it's also wrong to imagine the state holds the solution.

Bosses and states rely on each other, and the state has always played a central role in the economy.

This exposes the problems with seeing the market as a force of nature that runs according to fixed laws.

Superficially the economy can look like a giant marketplace of individuals trading commodities. But beneath this lies a web of social relationships that has come to dominate our lives.

Understanding these social relationships is key to understanding capitalism's power over us—and its weaknesses that we can exploit.

Workers are compelled to compete with one another for jobs in order to make a living. That's presented as a voluntary trade with the bosses—our labour power in return for a wage.

But it means that whatever our labour produces, the benefit goes to someone else who didn't work for it. This is the fundamental division in society, between those who work and those who exploit them.

Capitalists are also compelled to compete with one another. They must increase their profits or be driven out of business.

Marx identified this as the driving force behind capitalism, the pressure to have "accumulation for accumulation's sake".

This drives bosses to constantly try to squeeze more out of workers. But workers have no such need for the bosses, who produce nothing.

When it becomes less profitable to build homes, capitalists stop building them. That's why the last crash saw flats abandoned half built. The profiteers could respond to rent controls in the same way today.

But this isn't because the resources for building homes have disappeared. Neither have the construction workers or the equipment—or the real need.

All that would have been reduced is the potential profit, and that's what capitalist production is based on.

Instead we could use the wealth that workers create to meet human needs. This could mean building homes by the million, to decent standards, and for working class people not parasitic landlords.

This would mean workers taking democratic control of what's produced and how resources are distributed within society.

The point isn't to compromise with a form of "market socialism" or "mixed economy" with workers' cooperatives.

Even firms owned by workers are subject to the discipline of capitalist competition.

Cooperation

The goal is to replace that competition with cooperation—to get rid of the waste and the mismatch of resources that takes place under capitalism.

It means putting the decisions currently taken by boardrooms full of bosses in the hands of the working class.

Marxists don't have a detailed blueprint for how such a society would run. But we do see glimpses of what it could look like whenever workers fight their bosses.

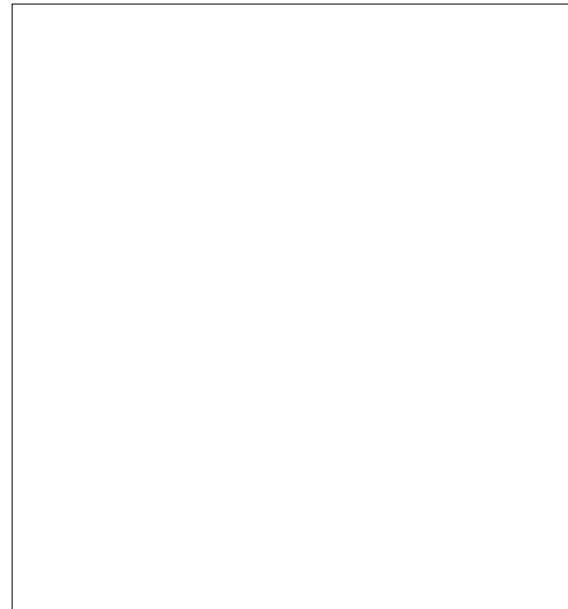
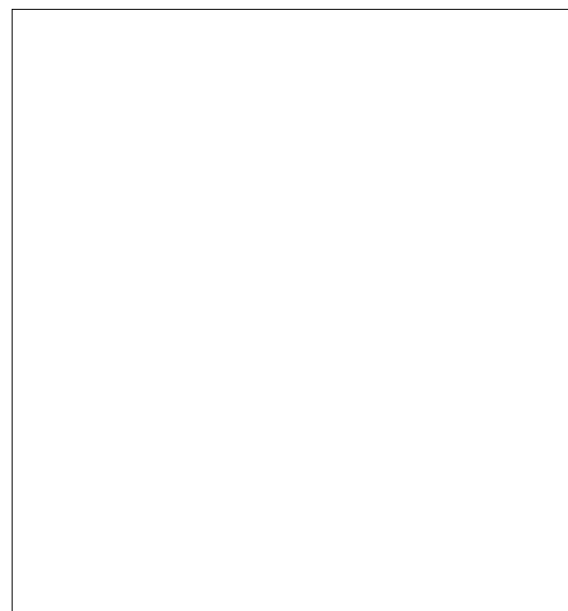
Every strike contains a challenge to the bosses' control of the workplace, and puts the onus on workers to act collectively.

Workers who have been trained to see themselves as isolated individuals have to create their own organisation.

This can range from rotas of picket lines and solidarity meetings to the struggle in Greece's state broadcaster ERT.

Workers refused to leave when bosses tried to sack them, occupied its premises and took over broadcasting themselves.

After all, who



What sums up the economy—stock market numbers (above) or workplace relations (top)?

knows the ins and outs of production in any workplace better than its workers?

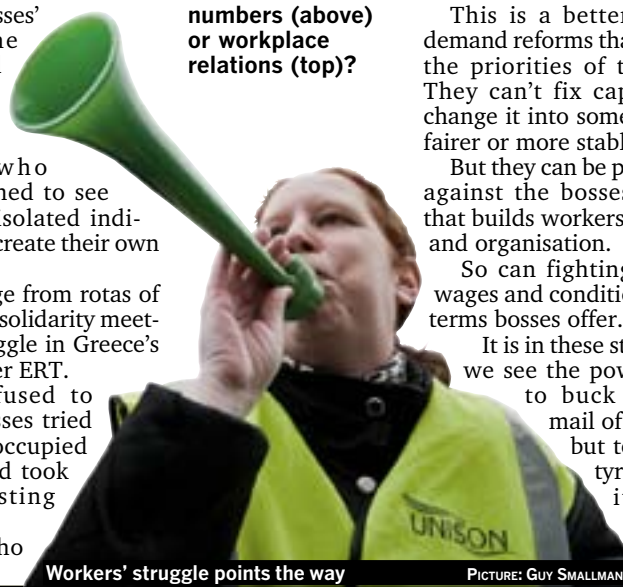
This is a better reason to demand reforms that clash with the priorities of the market. They can't fix capitalism, or change it into something that's fairer or more stable.

But they can be part of a fight against the bosses' priorities that builds workers' confidence and organisation.

So can fighting for better wages and conditions than the terms bosses offer.

It is in these struggles that we see the power not just to buck the black-mail of the market,

but to smash the tyranny of capitalist rule that underpins it.



Workers' struggle points the way

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

READ MORE

● **How can we take back the wealth from the rich?**
socialistworker.co.uk/art/40047/H

● **Economics of the Madhouse**
by Chris Harman, now available to read online at marxists.org/archive/harman/1995/madhouse

● **Ours to master and to own: workers' control from the commune to the present**
edited by Immanuel Ness and Dario Azzellini

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to www.bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



Release the report into the Marikana massacre

This is an edited version of an open letter from activists asking why the results of the inquiry into the massacre have not yet been made public

TO HIS Excellency President Jacob Zuma.

Shortly after the Marikana massacre, when the nation was still reeling from the gunning down of 34 striking platinum miners by South African Police, you told us, "We have to uncover the truth about what happened here."

"In this regard I've decided to institute a commission of inquiry. The inquiry will enable us to get to the real cause of the incident."

You also told us that, "In a very short space of time, we will announce the results."

It has now been one month since you received the findings of the Farlam Commission of Inquiry into the deaths of those young men.

You must, president Jacob Zuma, be painfully aware that the families of those who died, have had to wait patiently for two years and eight months for some kind of explanation. Many attended the commission day in day out, listening to various parties give evidence, hoping that all of this time, money and effort will lead to a just outcome.

But what would a just outcome look like? Firstly it would have to involve the truth, as much of it as possible, however painful.

The families deserve to know why their loved ones were gunned down by police using R5 rifles.

They deserve to know what discussions were had by police, by mining company Lonmin, and by your cabinet in the run-up to the massacre.

They deserve to know what preparations were made for the 16th, why mortuary vans were ordered on the morning before the attack, and why paramedics were prevented from assisting those injured in the crucial hour after the shooting took place.

They deserve to know what is going to happen



PRESIDENT JACOB Zuma visited the site of the Marikana massacre days after the police killed striking miners

BACK STORY

South African police opened fire on striking platinum miners on 16 August 2012

● Police gunned down 112 miners, killing 34 of them

● Another ten people had died in the days before the massacre

● Initially police claimed they came under attack and had no choice

● The miners went on to win their strike despite the repression

next. Who is going to be held accountable?

We do not know if the answers to these important questions are to be found in the final report of the Farlam Commission.

We know that you set about to establish the commission not just to restore calm at the time, but because you wanted to get to the truth. How else could you justify such a lengthy and

“

The families deserve to know why their loved ones were gunned down by police

expensive process?

But there is something else at stake here. In the aftermath of the massacre there was a collective weeping for our democracy. Nobody would expect that the might of the state would be brought down on a group of low paid workers under an African National Congress government.

In a constitutional democracy it is not a crime to go on strike, or to demand a meeting with one's employer.

Some notable people have even said that what happened at Marikana was worse than massacres like Sharpeville, because it was planned.

Whatever one believes, Marikana will live with us as the greatest blight on our democracy to date.

After the massacre you told people that, "Today is not an occasion for blame, finger-pointing or recrimination."

With the completion of the Farlam Commission Report surely that day has come?

We therefore appeal to you to make the unedited Farlam Commission Report immediately available.

If you are not able to do this, we request an explanation for why you are not willing to give the public full access to these findings.

Rehad Desai, Noor Nieftagodien, Patrick Bond, Trevor Ngwane, Ronnie Kasrils, Mark Heywood, Zwelinzima Vavi, Peter Alexander, Jacklyn Cock, Thea de Wet, Farid Esack, Leo Zellig, Fred Hendricks, Dale McKinley, Jane Duncan



Themes include:
Left alternatives across Europe
Where next after the General Election?
War, Imperialism and the Middle East
Racism and resistance
Can Marxism explain oppression?
How can Palestine be free?
Crisis and climate change

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Anne Alexander and Sami Ramadani on 'Who are ISIS?'
Peter Hain on his new book *Back to the future of socialism*
Ghada Karmi on Palestine
Darcus Howe and his biographers on his political life
Christine Buchholz on Pegida
Susan Rosenthal on 'Mental illness: a disorder of capitalism?'

Book now: 020 7819 1190
www.marxismfestival.org.uk
Photo: Light Brigading @ Flickr

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‘The Bradford fire showed up Thatcher’s contempt for us’

On the 30th anniversary of the 1985 Bradford City fire a damning new book from one of the survivors has fuelled calls for a fresh investigation into the disaster, reports Annette Mackin

ON 11 May 1985 football fans gathered at Bradford’s Valley Parade stadium to watch Bradford City play Lincoln City.

Smoke began rising in Block G in the Main Stand just before half time. Within five minutes the stand was an inferno. Some 56 fans died and at least 265 were injured.

Martin Fletcher was in the Main Stand. The fire killed his father, brother, grandfather and uncle.

Martin told Socialist Worker, “There is a need for answers about what happened and why it happened.”

Martin raked over transcripts from the inquiry into the fire for his new book Fifty Six—The Story of the Bradford Fire.

The inquiry by Sir Oliver Popplewell lasted a week. It concluded that the fire had been caused by a lighted match, cigarette or tobacco.

Two forensic experts said it was “less likely” that a cigarette or pipe tobacco caused the fire.

Evidence

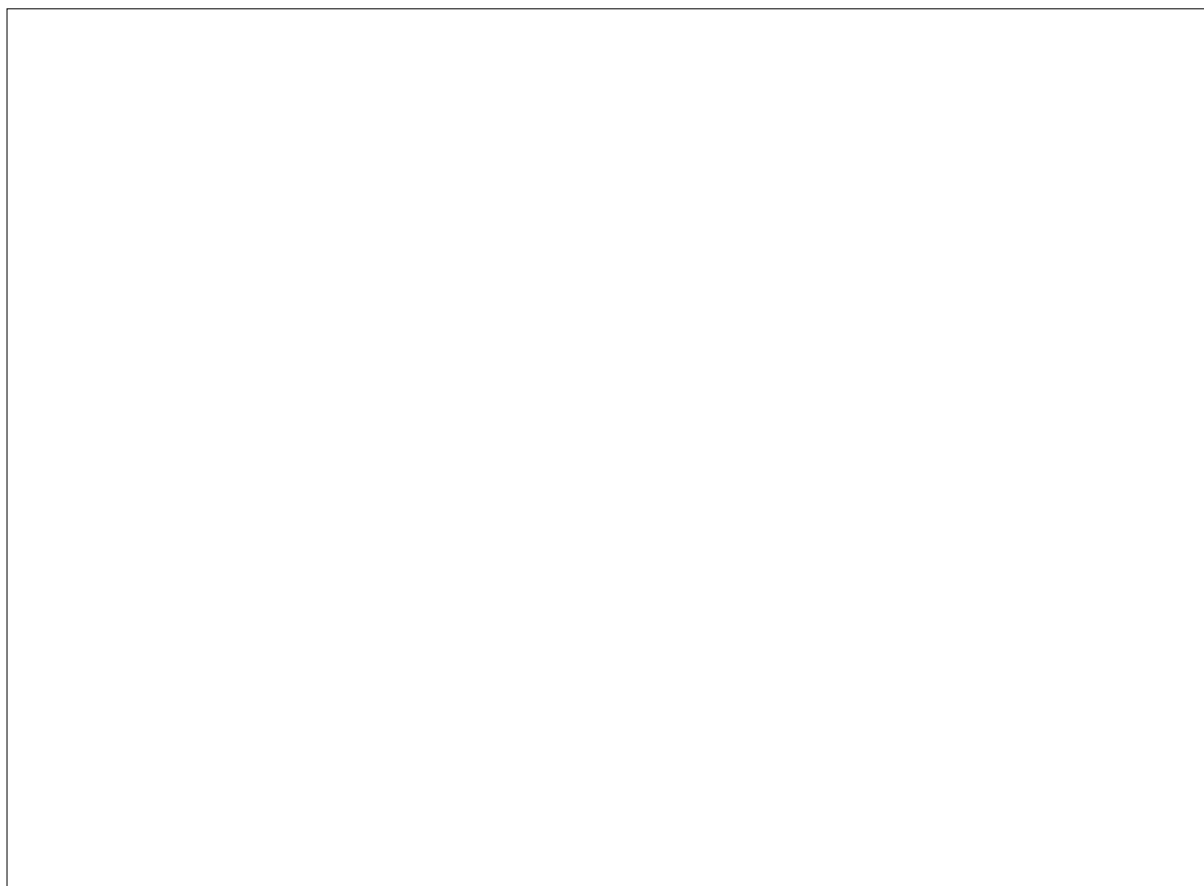
Dr David Woolley said a fire from a discarded cigarette would have left “red runs” on papers beneath the stand—but there was no evidence of this.

Home secretary Leon Brittan ordered the inquiry two days after the fire. He said no civil or criminal proceedings would be necessary.

An inquest jury later concluded that the deaths were caused by “misadventure”.

Martin said, “Things did not operate in the way they should have.

“It confirms what you’re growing to dread—that material evidence was not disclosed which could have changed the whole



THE FIRE at Bradford’s Valley Parade stadium turned the Main Stand into an inferno within minutes

mindset of the judicial appeal.”

When smoke was first detected police directed people into a narrow corridor at the back of the stand.

It took three minutes for chief inspector Charles Mawson to act when the fire broke out. When Mawson and other officers finally began to beckon people forward onto the safety of the pitch, flames were growing.

Some 90 seconds later over 40 people were dead in the death trap corridor. There were no fire extinguishers in Block G.

Martin said politicians could have done more to prevent the disaster.

“If politicians had implemented the safety recommendations we wouldn’t have had 30 years of this madness,” he said.

“There seemed to have been contempt for people in Margaret Thatcher’s Britain.

“Football was not a middle class game like rugby—the majority of fans were working class.

“It seemed we were not worthy of civil liberties.”

For more go to socialistworker.co.uk

Club boss linked to other fires

THE FIRE was one of at least nine fires at businesses owned by or associated with then Bradford City chairman Stafford Heginbotham in 18 years.

He put in huge insurance claims raking in what would amount to £27 million in today’s money.

It was standard procedure at the Valley Parade ground that exit doors be locked until 20 minutes before half time.

Heginbotham defended this on TV saying, “If the doors weren’t locked, people would be getting in for nothing.”

Yet for some reason this didn’t happen on

How police and politicians refused to keep fans safe

TOP COPS met in the weeks after the Hillsborough football disaster in 1989. They included former superintendent of West Yorkshire Allan Charlesworth and chief inspector Brown of West Yorkshire.

Charlesworth and Brown said they could advise South Yorkshire police with dealing with the aftermath of Hillsborough by briefing them on the Popplewell inquiry.

A two-page memo revealed that the brief

nature of the inquiry meant there was “severe pruning” of witnesses to “prevent duplicity”.

Martin said, “The police have to uphold the law and the law is meant to apply to them. Who guards the guards?”

The disaster followed decades of stadium disasters and deaths.

It took place in the year the 1984-85 Miners’ Strike ended—and football fans were comparing the way cops treated them to how the miners had suffered.

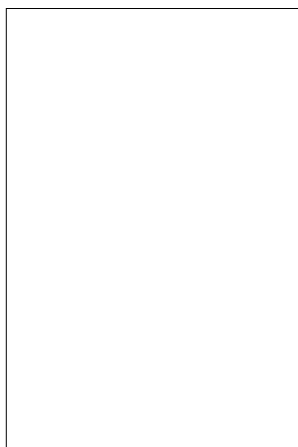
Inquiry after inquiry

was set up to address ground failings. Bosses and politicians ignored the recommendations each time.

The Main Stand at Valley Parade failed to comply with the Green Guide on safety at sports grounds.

A West Yorkshire health and safety inspector visited the grounds in 1980 and wrote to the club instructing it to remove litter from under the Main Stand.

In 1981 the same officer wrote to ask the club how it would evacuate the Main Stand in under two



Margaret Thatcher at the ground with the club boss after the fire

minutes. And the West Yorkshire County Council fire authority had twice met with health and safety executives at the ground.

Both times Valley Parade’s fire risk was classed as “substantial”.

Superintendent Paul Briggs told the Popplewell inquiry that he knew the Green Guide but “did not consider that it really applied”.

Chief inspector Charles Mawson told the inquiry, “I have never been briefed about evacuation from sporting venues and I have never briefed anyone.”

Club boss Stuart Heginbotham

the day of the fire.

Heginbotham was in dire financial straits at the time of the fire.

He had learned two days before it would cost £2 million to bring the ground up to safety standards required.

This did not feature in the Popplewell inquiry.

Martin said, “It’s very troubling that this was not revealed in the court.

“I struggle to see how justice can be done when Heginbotham has been dead for 20 years. It’s too little too late.”

IN BRIEF

Protest held over detainee death

PROTESTERS gathered outside Yarl's Wood immigration detention centre near Bedford last Saturday to demand justice for Pinakin Patel. He and his wife Bhavisha were detained after arriving from India for a holiday.

Pinakin died of a cardiac arrest in the family unit last month. Bhavisha was released the following week after a hunger strike by other detainees.

The protest was organised by the Movement for Justice.

Tour guides pay dispute at Globe

TOUR GUIDES and exhibition workers at the Globe Theatre in London are gearing up for a strike over pay.

The workers are fighting for rates of pay in line with other London venues. Bosses at the Globe are offering £11.72 an hour, which is out of line with pay at similar venues.

Strike dates had not been announced when Socialist Worker went to press.

Birmingham protest for Abortion Rights

THE ABORTION Rights campaign has called a protest in Birmingham against the anti-choice group March for Life on Saturday 16 May.

A coach will leave London from outside Birkbeck University, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX at 9.30am.

Abortion Rights will hold a rally in Chamberlain Square in Birmingham at 2pm. Tickets are £8 or £5 concession.

●abortionrights.org.uk

ITV pay strike ballot set to close

A STRIKE ballot at broadcaster ITV was set to end on Wednesday of this week.

Workers in the Bectu, NUJ and Unite unions are being balloted after overwhelmingly rejecting a below-inflation pay deal.

Baltimore solidarity in south London

PROTESTERS marched through south London last Sunday on the Baltimore to Brixton protest. It was in solidarity with the protests in Baltimore over the death of young black man Freddie Gray (see pages 8 and 10).

Chants rang out of "Same story every time, being black is not a crime". The protest was called by London Black Revs.

Royal Opera staff to ballot for pay strike

THEATRE WORKERS at the Royal Opera house are set to ballot for strikes over pay.

The workers, in the Bectu union, demand a 4 percent pay increase over 12 months.

EDUCATION



WORKERS AT Dundee university on the picket line last week

Dundee strike puts pressure on bosses

by SADIE ROBINSON

UCU UNION members at Dundee university struck on Tuesday of this week against compulsory redundancies.

Carlo Morelli is vice president of the UCU branch there.

He told Socialist Worker, "The strike is well-supported."

"We are boycotting the process of people reapplying for their jobs and people are quite confident about that."

Around 15 strikers joined a wet picket line at the university on Tuesday.

They were set to meet management for talks on Friday of this week.

Strikes

Bosses had wanted to make up to 15 workers in the school of medicine redundant, along with 17 in the college of arts and social sciences.

UCU members backed strikes by 72 percent in a

recent ballot. Now workers' action has forced them to retreat.

Carlo said, "It's good that the number of threatened redundancies in the School of Medicine has gone down."

"It shows management is under pressure."

"Now we need to see if they are serious about redeploying people."

"The ball is in their court."

●Send messages of support to ducu@dundee.ac.uk

ANTI-ACADEMIES

Academy chains face stiff resistance

NUT UNION members at Thorp Academy in Ryton, Gateshead, struck on Friday of last week to defend jobs and conditions.

More than 30 strikers joined a mass picket. Bosses are forcing massive cuts to their budget.

More action is planned.

■OVER 180 people debated a proposed conversion of three schools into a multi-academy trust at a meeting in York on Thursday of last week.

It involved parents, unions and anti-academy activists. They resolved to demand the city council ballot parents and staff to give them a say.

■NUT UNION members at Haringey sixth form school, north London, are set to strike on Wednesday and Thursday of this week over compulsory redundancies.

This follows converting to an academy last year.

●Send messages of support nialloconnor@haringeynut.org.uk

FIREFIGHTERS

Don't wait for Labour to reverse Tory pension attacks

by ANNETTE MACKIN

THE FBU union's bi-annual conference takes place in Blackpool from Tuesday to Friday of next week. It comes as firefighters' pensions, jobs and the fire service are under sustained attack.

While the rich have doubled their wealth under the Tories some 5,000 firefighter jobs, 40 stations and 150 engines have been axed.

Tory fire minister Penny Mordaunt lied to parliament to push through a vote on pension changes to make firefighters work until 60—up from 55.

Firefighters struck over 50 times in 18 months against the attacks. But the solid walkouts were not backed up with sustained action.



Striking firefighters protesting in central London this year

Simon Hickman, a firefighter in Greater Manchester, told Socialist Worker, "The huge pauses have demoralised the strongest members and the least confident think it's all over."

"Every walkout was solid. But that confidence was not reflected in the decisions of the leadership."

The stop-start nature of the campaign only gave confidence to fire bosses.

They sacked executive council member Ricky Matthews in Buckinghamshire last year for taking part in a strike, and locked out workers. The union should have responded by escalating action.

COLLEGES

Strikes over funding cuts

COLLEGE WORKERS in London are preparing for strikes in the wake of the Tory-led government's cut of 24 percent to adult education funding.

Some 100,000 student places across the capital could now be slashed as a result.

UCU union members at City and Islington College in north London could walk out in a series of strikes later this month.

UCU members are balloting for strikes at Hammersmith, Hackney and Lewisham colleges, as well as at the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London (Conel).

The union has called a lunchtime protest against cuts at Conel on

Wednesday of this week from 12 noon outside the college.

The UCU's further education committee voted last week for a motion seeking guarantees for job protection.

It said if bosses did not give this, the union would prepare and coordinate ballots for strikes.

Union members should organise urgent branch meetings and pass motions calling for ballots if bosses won't guarantee to no compulsory redundancies.

The UCU plans to have a big contingent on the People's Assembly demonstration against cuts on 21 June in London.

●More details on No More Austerity national demo see bit.ly/1hG3Fgz



Protesting outside parliament in March of this year

GREENWICH

Union walkout called off

THE UCU union called off a planned strike at Greenwich College in south east London on Friday of last week.

Workers say college bosses had threatened to refuse to attend talks at the Acas conciliation service if the walkout went ahead.

They are fighting new contracts that would impose

longer hours on them, cut their holidays and introduce unannounced teaching inspections.

The UCU members have already taken several days of strikes against the attack this year.

●Send messages of support to lynne.windeatt@btinternet.com and sbaille@gcc.ac.uk

LEWISHAM & SOUTHWARK

AROUND 100 protesters gathered at the Camberwell site of Lewisham and Southwark College (Lesoco), south London, last week.

College bosses are set to close the site in July after government funding cuts.

Up to 200 jobs are threatened.

Students can't transfer to other sites because of lack of funding.

Pascale Herreman is the UCU union rep at the site. She told Socialist Worker, "This site lies in the middle of an area with the largest community of Latin American and African people anywhere in Britain."

"Our students need somewhere to study that is accessible. A lot of them work unsocial hours and many have kids in local schools who have to be picked up."

COUNCILS

Angry strikers hand back service awards

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

THE ALL-OUT strike by Glasgow City Council workers entered its sixth week on Tuesday of this week.

The homelessness case-workers are demanding to be paid the same as social work colleagues who have similar responsibilities but are paid up to £5,000 a year more.

The 70 Unison union members on strike say they are being boosted by solidarity pouring in from across Britain and Northern Ireland.

Strikers addressed trade unionists on May Day demonstrations in Glasgow, Dundee and Derry. Last week support came from the Fire Brigades Union Scottish region, Derry Unison and Derry trades council.

Regular solidarity collections are building the strike fund—one from Take That fans at gigs in Glasgow brought in £200 last week.

And on Thursday of last week strikers protested outside the Labour-run city council headquarters as around 20 of them handed back long service awards.

Striker Ellen has worked for the council for 39 years. She told Socialist Worker, "We handed back the awards because management have



STRIKER ELLEN has worked for Glasgow council for 39 years

PICTURE: DUNCAN BROWN

let us and the public down by not entering into any meaningful negotiations.

"The award states it is for public service and loyalty to the citizens of Glasgow. Well they should show some loyalty to us and the homeless people we work with."

Ellen said the councillors who have signed the awards

are "the very people who refuse to speak to us".

Bosses say the workers only sort accommodation and their "contingency plan" is running the homelessness service during the walkout.

Strikers said one team leader has now resigned and "families with children are being turned away for

emergency accommodation".

Many wonder how long bosses can claim they are providing the statutory service.

●Send messages of solidarity enquiries@glasgowcityunison.co.uk Donate to the strike fund: Unity Bank, Sort code 08-60-01, Account number 20275792, Account name "Industrial Action—Income".

PRIVATISATION

Barnet workers determined to resist outsourcing plans

BARNET COUNCIL workers struck for two days last week against another wave of outsourcing at the Tory-run north London authority.

Services including children's centres, libraries and social work are in the Tories' outsourcing plan and companies are circling to get a slice.

Workers struck on Thursday and Friday of last week. Solid picket lines were boosted by a stream of cars, lorries and buses honking horns in support.

The adult social services floor in one workplace was described as "like a ghost town" by one insider.

Strikers told Socialist Worker why they are determined to resist the plan.

One social worker said, "The care element in this job is disappearing in Barnet."

"The emphasis is not on your relationships with people



Barnet strikers last week

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

but 'efficiencies'."

Tory leader of Barnet council Richard Cornelius said the council is carrying out "ambitious and innovative organisational change"

But one striker, a bus escort for vulnerable children, sees it

differently to Cornelius.

She said, "Don't be fooled—this is about profit making. You can't make a profit without cutting services."

Hundreds of Barnet workers have been outsourced.

This often leads to

redundancy as jobs are moved as far afield as Belfast, Carlisle, Coventry, Southampton and Darlington.

Barnet shows why every council worker must resist outsourcing.

Barnet council workers are not alone—across Britain privatisation of council services is gathering pace.

Local strikes can win small victories here and there. But they put national union leaders to shame.

They have failed to lead a real coordinated national fight against the farming out of council services.

●Send solidarity messages to contactus@barnetunison.org.uk Donate to Barnet Unison Industrial Action Fund, Building 4, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP.

Oppose 60 percent cuts to Barnet libraries—join the march Sat 9 May bit.ly/10Ur9jK

UNISON ELECTION

Vote left to reclaim union

THERE ARE less than two weeks to go until elections to the Unison union's national executive close.

Unison members have until 5pm on 15 May to vote for a fighting leadership.

A joint left campaign is standing candidates across

every region in Britain.

It argues that the union leadership's response to continuing attacks on jobs, pay, pensions and conditions has been "utterly inadequate".

●A full list of candidates is available at reclaimtheunion.blogspot.co.uk

HOUSING

Protests fight evictions

CAMPAIGNERS were preparing to protest outside Barnet Homes offices in north London on Wednesday of this week in support of an evicted family.

Juliet and her four children were among the 150 households kicked out of the Sweets Way estate last month. They have now been told to leave the temporary accommodation they had been sent to in Potter's Bar, Hertfordshire.

The family hasn't been offered appropriate housing, effectively forcing them to leave the borough.

Juliet is holding a meeting with Barnet Homes bosses to plead their case.

Housing activists in south London were protesting outside a home in Camberwell to stop an eviction as Socialist Worker went to press.

This followed a day of campaigning on the Dorchester Court estate in Herne Hill on Saturday of this week.

Landlords Manaquel want to hike rents up by £400 a month and has threatened tenants with eviction if they don't pay up.

NOTTINGHAM

Third rally to defend home

SOME 200 anti-eviction activists rallied in solidarity with Nottingham couple Sue and Tom Crawford on Friday of last week.

This was the third occasion when people have travelled from all over Britain to defend the Crawfords.

Activists stood outside the family home with Sue while others demonstrated noisily outside the county court where Tom applied for permission to appeal.

The Crawfords say they have paid off the mortgage.

They say the now defunct bank Bradford & Bingley changed the mortgage terms without informing them and claim £43,000 is still owed.

The judge adjourned the case—claiming that the noisy demonstration outside the court prevented him from hearing the proceedings.

Activists insist that Bradford & Bingley's case is full of inconsistencies. John Moore

ANTI-RACISM

Block EDL in Walthamstow

by ANNETTE MACKIN

ANTI-RACISTS IN Waltham Forest, east London, are organising to oppose a protest by the racist English Defence League (EDL) this Saturday.

Activists in Unite Against Fascism (UAF) and We Are Waltham Forest have been building the counter-demonstration by leafletting mosques, tube stations and holding weekly meetings.

Waltham Forest Council of Mosques has backed the Stop the EDL in Waltham Forest counter-demonstration.

In 2012 the EDL called a protest in the borough—and some 4,000 anti-fascists turned out to block them.

Dean Harris from Waltham Forest UAF told Socialist Worker, "Although we are confident and strong in



Protesting against the EDL

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

numbers, we cannot be complacent. Especially when Nazis are gaining support in Europe.

"We must show we are united and will not let them divide us."

●Stop the EDL in Waltham Forest—9 May, noon, Meet at the green space opposite Walthamstow Bus Station and Walthamstow Central by Walthamstow Town Square

REFUSE STRIKE GAINS SUPPORT

by TOMÁŠ TENGELE-EVANS

REFUSE LORRY drivers in Barking and Dagenham, east London, were continuing an eight-day strike as *Socialist Worker* went to press.

The action by GMB union members began on Friday of last week—and it is going strong.

Workers in the Unison and Unite unions refused to cross strikers' picket lines at the Pondfield depot on Tuesday of this week.

Bosses had moved lorries there in an attempt to run a reduced service with Unison and Unite members.

But the GMB moved pickets there. And workers refused to drive out of the depot. One worker said, "Nothing can go in and nothing can go out."

Strikers are fighting bosses' attempts to slash their pay by £1,000 a year.

They have also raised serious health and safety concerns about attempts to cut the "pre start" time from 30 to 15 minutes.

This is when drivers carry



REFUSE STRIKERS have won support as other workers refused to cross their picket lines

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

out health and safety checks on their lorries. Striker Jacob explained to *Socialist Worker*, "You can't do a proper health and safety check in 15 minutes. If something were to go wrong, the responsibility

would come down on us."

Workers previously struck between 21 and 22 March and 7 and 8 April. The latest strike went ahead after bosses refused to negotiate in talks at the government Acas

conciliation service.

The GMB put in a claim of £5,000 compensation against the bosses' proposed £300 lump sum. Bosses came back with a £400 "goodwill" gesture. The Unison

and Unite unions, which are significantly smaller in the workplace, have accepted the shoddy offer.

Striker Peter told *Socialist Worker*, "We feel totally insulted by the bosses' offer."

Another striker added, "My workload is always going up. 'Do more, do more' is all we hear from management and we're supposed to take a £1,000 pay cut?"

Workers are confident that they can force management to back down.

Jeffrey told *Socialist Worker*, "The rubbish is going to be building up and building up just like in 1979.

"They will have to negotiate with us."

Bosses have increased security since the dispute began. They have refused workers access to the depot's union offices to use the toilet and kitchen facilities.

Jeffrey said, "There's talk of them taking £2,000 off us now. This is all to put us off—but I'll never cross a picket line."

"We have to see it through to the end."

More strikes were expected to take place next week.

Every trade unionist needs to build solidarity for the strikers.

Workers' names have been changed. Send messages of support to gmb@gmbbarkingb10.org.uk

BROMLEY

South London council walkout has the power to beat outsourcing and cuts

by MARK DUNK

SOUTH LONDON council workers have launched a wave of strikes against privatisation.

The Unite union members are striking against a massive programme of cuts and outsourcing being pushed through by Bromley Council.

The council has £130 million in reserves.

Yet it is privatising the bulk of its services and cutting the number of directly employed staff from 4,000 to 300.

Library staff struck for



Strikers and supporters rally in Bromley, South London

five days last week. All Unite members at the council, except schools staff, joined their walkout on Friday of last week.

The strike closed the Central Library all week and pickets were held at libraries across the borough each day.

On Friday workers held a picket and rally at the civic centre before a delegation joined the May Day march in central London.

Unite branch secretary Kathy Smith said, "This is not about our pay, not about our pensions—this is about our services."

She said solidarity

donations had come in from union branches. But she added, "The donation that meant the most was £15 from an elderly man in Andover who read in a socialist paper that we were on strike."

Local trades council secretary Arthur Shaw told strikers, "You've inspired me so much. A holiday in the Bahamas couldn't beat the week I've had on the picket lines with you."

Other speakers included a Labour councillor and the branch secretary of Bromley Unison, who announced the branch's 600 members would be balloted to join the action.

Parks staff walked out for 24 hours on Tuesday of this week and a further council-wide strike was planned for election day.

Staff in passenger services and care staff are set to strike for seven days from Wednesday of next week, ending with another council-wide strike on 19 May.

The campaign has implications for council workers across Britain.

Send messages of support to kathleen.smith@bromley.gov.uk. Send donations for the strike fund to Kathy Smith, Unite Office, Bromley Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley, BR1 3UH (cheques payable to Bromley Unite)